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FOR PACIFISTS

BY
M. K. GANDHI



NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
AHMEDABAD



THE LONELY PILGRIM OF PEACE

First Edition, November, 1949
5000 copies

One rupee Four annas

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

The pacifists had proposed to meet in India to be able to have Gandhiji's personal guidance in their work. But God willed otherwise. The pacifists however have very properly declined to change their original plan. They must have thought: If Gandhiji himself is not available to us in his person at least his spirit would be witnessing and guiding our deliberations. Besides, he has worked for peace and goodwill between two powerful contending forces—representing nationalist India and imperialist Britain—in India for over thirty years. To us pacifists who earnestly desire an end of all war and establishment of permanent peace in the world a contact with the men and women who worked with this Man of Peace and with the tradition of *satyagraha* i.e. fight minus ill-will he has left behind him would not only be an inspiration but a practical guide.

We who have been entrusted with the task of publishing Gandhiji's writings naturally felt it our duty to offer to these friends something from Gandhiji's writings to help them in their deliberations. Hence this booklet.

Shri Bharatan Kumarappa willingly undertook to bring together as much relevant matter as could be collected at short notice. He has also in his editorial note tried to bring out the gist of what Gandhiji had to say to all those who want to end war and all lovers of peace who earnestly want to work for it. We draw special attention of the pacifist friends to what Shri Kumarappa has to say in his note because we feel that he has brought out in a nutshell all that Gandhiji had to say on the problem of ending all war and establishing permanent peace.

We feel sure the pacifist friends visiting India and others interested in the problem will appreciate our small contribution to the work of the Pacifist Conference.

Ahmedabad,
19-11-'49

EDITOR'S NOTE

Pacifists from all over the world are assembling early next month in Santiniketan to consider in conference the implications of Gandhiji's teachings on non-violence. They hoped originally to obtain the benefit of Gandhiji's own personal guidance in their deliberations. But unfortunately this could not be, and the conference meets without him.

Under the circumstances it was thought it might be useful to put into their hands in a concise form, extracts from his writings and speeches bearing on non-violence, more especially in relation to problems in which pacifists are interested. Accordingly this booklet has been hurriedly brought together.

A war-worn world, terror-stricken by the prospect of humanity being wiped out *en masse* by the atom bomb, is looking anxiously for an alternative to war. Again, some persons believe that killing of human beings, which war inevitably involves, is contrary to religion. So they will have nothing to do with war. In both cases, it is obvious that the underlying motive of pacifism is negative, viz. avoidance of war.

As against this, Gandhiji's conception is fundamentally positive. His non-violence is not a weapon to be used merely to prevent war. It is, on the contrary, to enter into the very fibre of one's being and revolutionize all sides of one's life — individual, domestic, social, political and economic. The individual is to practise non-violence in his everyday life. He is to see, for example, that he is in no way a party to exploitation and injustice as he is, for instance, when he consumes articles manufactured by capitalists who exploit labour or colonial peoples. or when he supports by his taxes an imperialist government. The

truly non-violent man simplifies his life and reduces his wants so that he does not take for himself more than the humblest of his neighbours. Besides, he is a crusader against every form of oppression and injustice, in non-violently fighting which he is prepared to lay down his life.

It is a far cry, therefore, from pacifism to Gandhiji's idea of non-violence. While pacifism hopes to get rid of war, chiefly by refusing to fight and by carrying on propaganda against war, Gandhiji goes much deeper and sees that war cannot be avoided, so long as the seeds of it remain in man's breast and grow and develop in his social, political and economic life. Gandhiji's cure is therefore very radical and far-reaching. It demands nothing less than rooting out violence from oneself and from one's environment.

It remains to be seen whether the world will accept Gandhiji's method. It involves much self-restraint and renunciation, while the whole tendency under a modern industrialized civilization is towards self-indulgence and multiplication of wants. Western pacifists wish, as a rule, to maintain their standard of living and are not prepared to lower it in any way. All they seek is some way of doing away with war, without changing in the slightest their mode of life. They want both God and mammon. It is hoped that this booklet will reveal to lovers of peace the folly of this position.

To many pacifists, Gandhiji's participation in war at various times in his life has seemed an enigma and a mystery. An attempt has therefore been made here to let him explain himself in this regard as fully as possible.

It must not be thought that this booklet gives a complete picture of Gandhiji's teachings in regard to non-violence. For this, one must turn to the two volumes of *Non-violence in Peace and War*. All that could be done here was to present in as small a space as possible the gist of his teachings in so far as they are relevant

to the problems of interest to pacifists. Accordingly, emphasis is here laid chiefly on general principles and on international problems rather than problems of Indian origin and setting.

The chapter headings are our own, as well as, of course, the arrangement of the material.

Bombay,
November, 1949

Bharatan Kumarappa

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FOR PACIFISTS

INTRODUCTORY

A TREATISE ON NON-VIOLENCE

A friend suggests that I should write a treatise on the science of *ahimsa*.

To write such a treatise is beyond my powers. I am not built for academic writings. Action is my domain. What I understand, according to my lights, to be my duty, and what comes my way, I do. All my action is actuated by the spirit of service. Let any one who can systematize *ahimsa* into a science, do so — if indeed it lends itself to such treatment.

From the above it may be concluded that there is no need at present for the treatise in question. Any such during my lifetime would necessarily be incomplete. If at all, it could only be written after my death. And even so let me give the warning that it would fail to give a complete exposition of *ahimsa*. No man has ever been able to describe God fully. The same holds true of *ahimsa*. I can give no guarantee that I will do or believe tomorrow what I do or hold to be true today. God alone is omniscient. Man in the flesh is essentially imperfect. He may be described as being made in the image of God but he is far from being God. God is invisible, beyond the reach of the human eye. All that we can do, therefore, is to try to understand the words and actions of those whom we regard as men of God. Let them soak into our being and let us endeavour to translate them into action but only so far as they appeal to the heart. Could any scientific treatise do more for us?

(Translated from Gujarati)

Harijan, 3-3-'46

THE LAW OF NON-VIOLENCE

I am not a visionary. I claim to be a practical idealist. The religion of non-violence is not meant merely for the *rishis* and saints. It is meant for the common people as well. Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute, and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law — to the strength of the spirit.

I have therefore ventured to place before India the ancient law of self-sacrifice. For Satyagraha and its offshoots, non-co-operation and civil resistance, are nothing but new names for the law of suffering. The *rishis* who discovered the law of non-violence in the midst of violence, were greater geniuses than Newton. They were themselves greater warriors than Wellington. Having themselves known the use of arms, they realized their uselessness, and taught a weary world that its salvation lay not through violence but through non-violence.

Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. It does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer, but it means putting one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire, to save his honour, his religion and his soul.

Young India, 11-8-'20

Non-violence is a term I had to coin in order to bring out the root meaning of *ahimsa*. In spite of the negative particle 'non', it is no negative force. Superficially we are surrounded in life by strife and bloodshed, life living upon life. But some great seer, who ages ago penetrated the centre of truth, said: It is not through strife and

violence but through non-violence that man can fulfil his destiny and his duty to his fellow creatures. It is a force which is more positive than electricity, and more powerful than even ether. At the centre of non-violence is a force which is self-acting. *Ahimsa* means love in the Pauline sense, and yet something more than the 'love' defined by St. Paul, although I know St. Paul's beautiful definition is good enough for all practical purposes. *Ahimsa* includes the whole creation, and not only human. Besides 'love' in the English language has other connotations, and so I was compelled to use the negative word. But it does not, as I have told you, express a negative force, but a force superior to all the forces put together. One person who can express *ahimsa* in life exercises a force superior to all the forces of brutality.

Q. Is it possible for any individual to achieve this?

A. Certainly. If there was any exclusiveness about it, I should reject it at once.

Harizan, 14-3-'36

The non-violence of my conception is a more active and more real fighting against wickedness than retaliation whose very nature is to increase wickedness. I contemplate a mental, and therefore a moral, opposition to immoralities. I seek entirely to blunt the edge of the tyrant's sword, not by putting up against it a sharper-edged weapon, but by disappointing his expectation that I would be offering physical resistance. The resistance of the soul that I should offer instead would elude him. It would at first dazzle him, and at last compel recognition from him, which recognition would not humiliate him but would uplift him. It may be urged that this again is an ideal state. And so it is. The propositions from which I have drawn my arguments are as true as Euclid's definitions, which are none the less true, because in practice we are unable even to draw Euclid's line on a blackboard. But even a geometrician finds it impossible to get on without bearing in mind Euclid's definitions. Nor may we

dispense with the fundamental propositions on which the doctrine of Satyagraha is based.

Young India, 8-10-'25

Mutual trust and mutual love are no trust and no love. The real love is to love them that hate you, to love your neighbour even though you distrust him. I have sound reasons for distrusting the English official world. If my love is sincere, I must love the Englishman in spite of my distrust. Of what avail is my love, if it be only so long as I trust my friend? Even thieves do that. They become enemies immediately the trust is gone.

Harijan, 3-3-'46

We have not been able yet to discover the true measure of the innumerable properties of an article of daily use like water. Some of its properties fill us with wonder. Let us not, therefore, make light of a force of the subtlest kind like *ahimsa*, and let us try to discover its hidden power with patience and faith. Within a brief space of time we have carried to a fairly successful conclusion a great experiment in the use of this force. As you know I have not set much store by it. Indeed I have hesitated even to call it an experiment in *ahimsa*. But according to the legend, as Rama's name was enough to float stones, even so the movement carried on in the name of *ahimsa* brought about a great awakening in the country and carried us ahead. It is difficult to forecast the possibilities when men with unflinching faith carry this experiment further forward. Our usual experience is that in most cases non-violence is the real antidote of violence, and it is safe to infer from it that the highest violence can be met by the highest non-violence.

Harijan, 28-7-'40

EVIDENCE FOR THE FORCE OF LOVE

The force of love is the same as the force of the soul or truth. We have evidence of its working at every step. The universe would disappear without the existence of that force. Thousands, indeed tens of thousands, depend for their existence on a very active working of this force. Little quarrels of millions of families in their daily lives disappear before the exercise of this force. Hundreds of nations live in peace. History does not and cannot take note of this fact. History is really a record of every interruption of the even working of the force of love or of the soul. Two brothers quarrel ; one of them repents and re-awakens the love that was lying dormant in him ; the two again begin to live in peace ; nobody takes note of this. But if the two brothers, through the intervention of solicitors or some other reason, take up arms or go to law — which is another form of the exhibition of brute force —, their doings would be immediately noticed in the press, they would be the talk of their neighbours and would probably go down to history. But what is true of families and communities is true of nations. There is no reason to believe that there is one law for families and another for nations. History, then, is a record of an interruption of the course of nature. Soul-force, being natural, is not noted in history.

Hind Swaraj, chapter xvii

If we turn our eyes to the time of which history has any record down to our own time, we shall find that man has been steadily progressing towards *ahimsa*. Our remote ancestors were cannibals. Then came a time when they were fed up with cannibalism and they began to live on chase. Next came a stage when man was ashamed of leading the life of a wandering hunter. He therefore took

to agriculture and depended principally on mother earth for his food. Thus from being a nomad he settled down to civilized stable life, founded villages and towns, and from member of a family he became member of a community and a nation. All these are signs of progressive *ahimsa* and diminishing *himsa*. Had it been otherwise, the human species should have been extinct by now, even as many of the lower species have disappeared.

Prophets and *avatars* have also taught the lesson of *ahimsa* more or less. Not one of them has professed to teach *himsa*. And how should it be otherwise? *Himsa* does not need to be taught. Man as animal is violent, but as Spirit is non-violent. The moment he awakes to the Spirit within he cannot remain violent. Either he progresses towards *ahimsa* or rushes to his doom. That is why the prophets and *avatars* have taught the lessons of truth, harmony, brotherhood, justice, etc — all attributes of *ahimsa*.

If we believe that mankind has steadily progressed towards *ahimsa*, it follows that it has to progress towards it still further. Nothing in this world is static, everything is kinetic. If there is no progression, then there is inevitable retrogression.

The present war is the saturation point in violence. It spells to my mind also its doom. Daily I have testimony of the fact that *ahimsa* was never before appreciated by mankind as it is today. All the testimony from the West that I continue to receive points in the same direction.

Harijan, 11-8-'40

IMPLICATIONS OF NON-VIOLENCE

(1) Non-violence is the law of the human race and is infinitely greater than and superior to brute force.

(2) In the last resort it does not avail to those who do not possess a living faith in the God of Love.

(3) Non-violence affords the fullest protection to one's self-respect and sense of honour, but not always to possession of land or movable property, though its habitual practice does prove a better bulwark than the possession of armed men to defend them. Non-violence, in the very nature of things, is of no assistance in the defence of ill-gotten gains and immoral acts.

(4) Individuals or nations who would practise non-violence must be prepared to sacrifice (nations to the last man) their all except honour. It is, therefore, inconsistent with the possession of other people's countries, i.e., modern imperialism, which is frankly based on force for its defence.

(5) Non-violence is a power which can be wielded equally by all — children, young men and women or grown-up people, provided they have a living faith in the God of Love and have therefore equal love for all mankind. When non-violence is accepted as the law of life it must pervade the whole being and not be applied to isolated acts.

(6) It is a profound error to suppose that whilst the law is good enough for individuals it is not for masses of mankind.

Harijan, 5-9-'36

Let there be no cant about non-violence. It is not like a garment to be put on and off at will. Its seat is in the heart, and it must be an inseparable part of our very being.

Young India, 12-8-'26

Non-violence to be a creed has to be all-pervasive. I cannot be non-violent about one activity of mine and violent about others.

Harijan, 12-10-'35

For me non-violence is not a mere philosophical principle. It is the rule and breath of my life. I know I fail often, sometimes consciously, more often unconsciously. It is a matter not of the intellect but of the heart.

Young India, 13-9-'28

Non-violence is not an easy thing to understand, still less to practise, weak as we are. We must all act prayerfully and humbly and continually ask God to open the eyes of our understanding, being ever ready to act according to the light as we receive it.

Young India, 7-2-'29

5

VIOLENCE IMPLIES ATHEISM

This feeling of helplessness in us has really arisen from our deliberate dismissal of God from our common affairs. We have become atheists for all practical purposes. And therefore we believe that in the long run we must rely upon physical force for our protection. In the face of physical danger we cast all our philosophy to the winds. Our daily life is a negation of God.

Young India, 25-5-'21

The business of every God-fearing man is to dissociate himself from evil in total disregard of consequences. He must have faith in a good deed producing only a good result: that, in my opinion, is the Gita doctrine of work without attachment. God does not permit him to peep into the future. He follows truth although the following of it may endanger his very life. He knows that it is better to die in the way of God than to live in the way of Satan.

Young India, 29-12-'20

In *ahimsa* it is not the votary who acts in his own strength. Strength comes from God. If, therefore, the way is opened for me to go, He will give me the physical endurance and clothe my word with the needed power. Anyway all through my life I have acted in that faith. Never have I attributed any independent strength to myself. This may be considered by men who do not believe in a higher Power than themselves as a drawback and a helpless state. I must admit that limitation of *ahimsa* if it be accounted as such.

Harijan, 18-8-'40

6

COURAGE REQUIRED

Physical-force men are strangers to the courage that is requisite in a passive resister.* What do you think? Wherein is courage required — in blowing others to pieces from behind a cannon, or with a smiling face to approach a cannon and be blown to pieces? Who is the true warrior — he who keeps death always as a bosom friend, or he who controls the death of others? Believe me that a man devoid of courage and manhood can never be a passive resister.

This, however, I will admit that even a man weak in body is capable of offering this resistance. One man can offer it just as well as millions. Both men and women can indulge in it. It does not require the training of an army; it needs no jiu-jitsu. Control over the mind is alone necessary, and when that is attained, man is free like the king of the forest and his very glance withers the enemy.

Passive resistance is an all-sided sword, it can be used anyhow; it blesses him who uses it and against whom it

* Gandhiji in his later writings speaks of 'passive resister' as *satyagrahi* or non-violent resister, and of 'passive resistance' as *Satyagraha* or non-violent resistance.

is used. Without drawing a drop of blood it produces far-reaching results. It never rusts and cannot be stolen. Competition between passive resisters does not exhaust. The sword of passive resistance does not require a scabbard. It is strange indeed that such a weapon should be considered to be a weapon merely of the weak.

Hind Swaraj, chapter xvii

I have often noticed that weak people have taken shelter under the Congress creed or under my advice, when they have simply, by reason of their cowardice, been unable to defend their own honour or that of those who were entrusted to their care. I recall the incident that happened near Bettiah when non-co-operation was at its height. Some villagers were looted. They had fled, leaving their wives, children and belongings to the mercy of the looters. When I rebuked them for their cowardice in thus neglecting their charge, they shamelessly pleaded non-violence. I publicly denounced their conduct and said that my non-violence fully accommodated violence offered by those who did not feel non-violence and who had in their keeping the honour of their womenfolk and little children. Non-violence is not a cover for cowardice, but it is the supreme virtue of the brave. Exercise of non-violence requires far greater bravery than that of swordsmanship. Cowardice is wholly inconsistent with non-violence. Translation from swordsmanship to non-violence is possible and, at times, even an easy stage. Non-violence, therefore, presupposes ability to strike. It is a conscious deliberate restraint put upon one's desire for vengeance. But vengeance is any day superior to passive, effeminate and helpless submission. Forgiveness is higher still. Vengeance too is weakness. The desire for vengeance comes out of fear of harm, imaginary or real. A dog barks and bites when he fears. A man who fears no one on earth would consider it too troublesome even to summon up anger against one who is vainly trying to injure him. The sun does not wreak vengeance upon little children who

throw dust at him. They only harm themselves in the act.

Young India, 12-8-'26

He who cannot protect himself or his nearest and dearest or their honour by non-violently facing death, may and ought to do so by violently dealing with the oppressor. He who can do neither of the two is a burden. He has no business to be the head of a family. He must either hide himself, or must rest content to live for ever in helplessness and be prepared to crawl like a worm at the bidding of a bully.

Young India, 11-10-'28

Cowardice is impotence worse than violence.

Harijan, 15-9-'46

There is hope for a violent man to become non-violent. There is no such hope for the impotent.

Harijan, 21-10-'39

Doing injury to another is obviously violence but harbouring injury to another and yet unwillingness from cowardice to defend oneself or one's neighbour is also violence and probably worse than the first.

Self-defence must be pure and simple. Then too it must never be cowardly or crude. It must, therefore, never be secret. Such is stabbing in the back and evading detection. There can be no denying the fact that no one needs training in the use of arms in self-defence. What is wanted for the purpose is strong arms and stronger will.

Harijan, 8-9-'46

Self-defence can be violent or non-violent. I have always advised and insisted on non-violent defence.

Harijan, 2-3-'40

There is no difficulty about my endorsing the statement that "Satyagraha demands absolute non-violence, and that even a woman who is in danger of being violated must not defend herself with violence." Both these statements relate to an ideal state, and therefore are made with reference to those men and women who have so far purified themselves as to have no malice, no anger, no violence in them. In the first instance such a woman would stand in no danger of violence; and in the second, if she did, without doing violence to the ruffian she would be able completely to defend her honour. I believe implicitly in the proposition that perfect purity is its own defence. The veriest ruffian becomes for the time being tame in the presence of resplendent purity.

Young India, 8-10-'25

(1) How is a woman to protect her own honour? and (2) how are her male relatives to protect it?

As regards the first question, where there is a non-violent atmosphere, where there is the constant teaching of *ahimsa*, woman will not regard herself as dependent, weak or helpless. She is not really helpless when she is really pure. Her purity makes her conscious of her strength. I have always held that it is physically impossible to violate a woman against her will. The outrage takes place only when she gives way to fear or does not realize her moral strength. If she cannot meet the assailant's physical might, her purity will give her the strength to die before he succeeds in violating her. Take the case of Sita. Physically she was a weakling before Ravana, but her purity was more than a match even for his giant might. He tried to win her with all kinds of allurements but could not carnally touch her without her consent. On the other hand, if a woman depends on her own physical strength or upon a weapon she possesses, she is sure to be discomfited whenever her strength is exhausted.

The second question is easily answered. The brother or father or friend will stand between his protégé and

her assailant. He will then either dissuade the assailant from his wicked purpose or allow himself to be killed by him in preventing him. In so laying down his life he will not only have done his duty, but given a new accession of strength to his protegee who will now know how to protect her honour.

"But," said one of the sisters from Poona, "there lies the rub. How is a woman to lay down her life? Is it possible for her to do so?"

"Oh!" said Gandhiji, "any day more possible for her than for man. I know that women are capable of throwing away their lives for a much lesser purpose. Only a few days ago a young girl of twenty burnt herself to death as she felt she was being persecuted for refusing to go in for ordinary studies. And she perished with such cool courage and determination! She ignited her *sari* with an ordinary oil-light and did not so much as raise a cry, so that the people in the neighbouring room were unaware of the happening until all was over. I do not give these details to commend her example, but to show how easily woman can throw away her life."

Harijan, 1-9-'40

Woman is more fitted than man to make explorations and take bolder actions in *ahimsa*. For the courage of self-sacrifice woman is any day superior to man, as I believe man is to woman for the courage of the brute.

Harijan, 5-11-'38

7

SUFFERING AND SACRIFICE

Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering; it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force. For instance, the Government of the day has passed a law which is applicable to me. I do not like it. If by using violence I force the

Government to repeal the law, I am employing what may be termed body-force. If I do not obey the law and accept the penalty for its breach, I use soul-force. It involves sacrifice of self.

Hind Swaraj, chapter xvii

Suffering injury in one's own person is of the essence of non-violence and is the chosen substitute for violence to others. It is not because I value life low that I can countenance with joy thousands voluntarily losing their lives for Satyagraha, but because I know that it results in the long run in the least loss of life, and, what is more, it ennobles those who lose their lives and morally enriches the world for their sacrifice.

Young India, 8-10-'25

Non-resistance is restraint voluntarily undertaken for the good of society. It is, therefore, an intensely active, purifying, inward force. It is often antagonistic to the material good of the non-resister. It may even mean his utter material ruin.

Young India, 23-9-'26

8

TRAINING FOR NON-VIOLENCE

Non-violence does not require any outside or outward training. It simply requires the will not to kill even in retaliation and the courage to face death without revenge.

Harijan, 8-9-'46

To become a passive resister is easy enough but it is also equally difficult. I have known a lad of fourteen years become a passive resister ; I have known also sick people do likewise ; I have also known physically strong and otherwise happy people unable to take up passive resistance. After a great deal of experience it seems to me that those who want to become passive resisters for

the service of the country have to observe perfect chastity, adopt poverty, follow truth, and cultivate fearlessness.

Chastity is one of the greatest discipline without which the mind cannot attain requisite firmness. A man who is unchaste loses stamina, becomes emasculated and cowardly. He whose mind is given over to animal passions is not capable of any great effort. This can be proved by innumerable instances. What, then, is a married person to do is the question that arises naturally ; and yet it need not. When a husband and wife gratify the passions, it is no less an animal indulgence on that account. Such an indulgence, except for perpetuating the race, is strictly prohibited. But a passive resister has to avoid even that very limited indulgence, because he can have no desire for progeny. A married man, therefore, can observe perfect chastity.

Just as there is necessity for chastity, so there is for poverty. Pecuniary ambition and passive resistance cannot well go together. Those who have money are not expected to throw it away, but they *are* expected to be indifferent about it. They must be prepared to lose every penny rather than give up passive resistance.

Passive resistance has been described in the course of our discussion as truth-force. Truth, therefore, has necessarily to be followed and that at any cost.

Passive resistance cannot proceed a step without fearlessness. Those alone can follow the path of passive resistance who are free from fear, whether as to their possessions, false honour, their relatives, the government, bodily injuries or death.

These observances are not to be abandoned in the belief that they are difficult. Nature has implanted in the human breast ability to cope with any difficulty or suffering that may come to man unprovoked. These qualities are worth having even for those who do not wish to serve the country. Let there be no mistake, as those who want to train themselves in the use of arms are also obliged to have those qualities more or less. Everybody does not

become a warrior for the wish. A would-be warrior will have to observe chastity and to be satisfied with poverty as his lot. A warrior without fearlessness cannot be conceived of. It may be thought that he would not need to be exactly truthful, but that quality follows real fearlessness. When a man abandons truth, he does so owing to fear in some shape or form. The above four attributes, then, need not frighten anyone.

Hind Swaraj, chapter xvii

How are we to train individuals or communities in this difficult art ?

There is no royal road, except through living the creed in your life which must be a living sermon. Of course, the expression in one's own life presupposes great study, tremendous perseverance, and thorough cleansing of one's self of all the impurities. If for mastering of the physical sciences you have to devote a whole lifetime, how many lifetimes may be needed for mastering the greatest spiritual force that mankind has known ? But why worry even if it means several lifetimes ? For, if this is the only permanent thing in life, if this is the only thing that counts, then whatever effort you bestow on mastering it is well spent. Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven and everything else shall be added unto you. The Kingdom of Heaven is *ahimsa*.

Harijan, 14-3-'36

The first step is firmly to resolve that all untruth and *himsa* shall hereafter be taboo to us, whatever sacrifice it might seem to involve. For, the good these may seem to achieve is in appearance only, but in reality it is deadly poison. If our resolve is firm and our conviction clear, it would mean half the battle won, and the practice of these two qualities would come comparatively easy to us.

We have all along regarded the spinning wheel, village crafts, etc. as the pillars of *ahimsa*, and so indeed they are. They must stand. But we have now to go a step further. A votary of *ahimsa* will of course base

upon non-violence, if he has not already done so, all his relations with his parents, his children, his wife, his servants, his dependents, etc. But the real test will come at the time of political or communal disturbances or under the menace of thieves and dacoits. Mere resolve to lay down one's life under the circumstances is not enough. There must be the necessary qualification for making the sacrifice. If I am a Hindu, I must fraternize with the Mussulmans and the rest. In my dealings with them I may not make any distinction between my co-religionists and those who might belong to a different faith. I would seek opportunities to serve them without any feeling of fear or unnaturalness. The word 'fear' can have no place in the dictionary of *ahimsa*. Having thus qualified himself by his selfless service, a votary of pure *ahimsa* will be in a position to make a fit offering of himself in a communal conflagration. Similarly, to meet the menace of thieves and dacoits, he will need to go among, and cultivate friendly relations with, the communities from which the thieves and dacoits generally come.

Harijan, 21-7-'40

Arms are surely unnecessary for a training in *ahimsa*. In fact the arms, if any, have to be thrown away, as the Khansabeh did in the Frontier Province. Those who hold that it is essential to learn violence before we can learn non-violence, would hold that only sinners can be saints.

Just as one must learn the art of killing in the training for violence, so one must learn the art of dying in the training for non-violence. Violence does not mean emancipation from fear, but discovering the means of combating the cause for fear. Non-violence, on the other hand, has no cause for fear. The votary of non-violence has to cultivate the capacity for sacrifice of the highest type in order to be free from fear. He recks not if he should lose his land, his wealth, his life. He who has not overcome all fear cannot practise *ahimsa* to perfection. The votary of *ahimsa* has only one fear, that is of God. He who seeks

refuge in God ought to have a glimpse of the *Atman* that transcends the body ; and the moment one has a glimpse of the Imperishable *Atman* one sheds the love of the perishable body. Training in non-violence is thus diametrically opposed to training in violence. Violence is needed for the protection of things external, non-violence is needed for the protection of the *Atman*, for the protection of one's honour.

This non-violence cannot be learnt by staying at home. It needs enterprise. In order to test ourselves we should learn to dare danger and death, mortify the flesh, and acquire the capacity to endure all manner of hardships. He who trembles or takes to his heels the moment he sees two people fighting is not non-violent, but a coward. A non-violent person will lay down his life in preventing such quarrels. The bravery of the non-violent is vastly superior to that of the violent. The badge of the violent is his weapon — spear, or sword, or rifle. God is the shield of the non-violent.

This is not a course of training for one intending to learn non-violence. But it is easy to evolve one from the principles I have laid down.

Harijan, 1-9-'40

The best preparation for, and even the expression of, non-violence lies in the determined pursuit of the constructive programme. Anyone who believes that without the backing of the constructive programme he will show non-violent strength when the testing time comes will fail miserably. It will be, like the attempt of a starving unarmed man to match his physical strength against a fully fed and panoplied soldier, foredoomed to failure. He who has no belief in the constructive programme has, in my opinion, no concrete feeling for the starved millions. He who is devoid of that feeling cannot fight non-violently. In actual practice the expression of my non-violence has kept exact pace with that of my identification with starved humanity. I am still far from the non-violence of my

conception, for am I not still far away from the identification of my conception with dumb humanity?

Harijan, 12-4-'42

Q. What should one do in his day-to-day life — that is, what is the minimum programme — so that one can acquire non-violence of the brave?

A. The minimum that is required of a person wishing to cultivate the *ahimsa* of the brave is first to clear one's thought of cowardice and in the light of the clearance regulate his conduct in every activity, great or small. Thus the votary must refuse to be cowed down by his superior, without being angry. He must, however, be ready to sacrifice his post, however remunerative it may be. Whilst sacrificing his all, if the votary has no sense of irritation against his employer, he has *ahimsa* of the brave in him. Assume that a fellow passenger threatens my son with assault and I reason with the would-be-assailant who then turns upon me. If then I take his blow with grace and dignity, without harbouring any ill-will against him, I exhibit the *ahimsa* of the brave. Such instances are of every day occurrence and can be easily multiplied. If I succeed in curbing my temper every time and though able to give blow for blow I refrain, I shall develop the *ahimsa* of the brave which will never fail me and which will compel recognition from the most confirmed adversaries.

Harijan, 17-11-'46

Cultivation of this virtue may need long practice, even extending to several births. It does not become useless on that account. Travelling along the route, the pilgrim will meet richer experiences from day to day so that he may have a glimpse of the beauty he is destined to see at the top. This will add to his zest. No one is entitled to infer from this that the path will be a continuous carpet of roses without thorns. A poet has sung that the way

to reach God accrues only to the very brave, never to the faint-hearted.

Harijan, 14-12-'47

9

EVEN ONE NON-VIOLENT INDIVIDUAL ENOUGH

All need not possess the same measure of conscious non-resistance for its full operations. It is enough for one person only to possess it, even as one general is enough to regulate and dispose of the energy of millions of soldiers who enlist under his banner, even though they know not the why and the wherefore of his dispositions. The monkeys of one Rama were enough to confound the innumerable hosts armed from head to foot of the ten-headed Ravana.

Young India, 23-9-'26

Q. I want to know if one man can hold the whole violence at bay.

A. If he cannot, you must take it that he is not a true representative of *ahimsa*. Supposing I cannot produce a single instance in life of a man who truly converted his adversary, I would then say that it is because no one had yet been found to express *ahimsa* in its fulness.

Harijan, 14-3-'36

Where swords, knives, *lathis* and stones are freely used, what is a man to do single-handed? Is it possible for one to receive these deadly blows with ill-will in one's heart? It is clear that it is impossible to do so, unless one is saturated with charity. It is only he who feels one with his opponent that can receive his blows as though they were so many flowers. Even one such man, if God favours him, can do the work of a thousand. It requires soul-force — moral courage — of the highest type.

Harijan, 13-7-'40

I have maintained that, even if there is one individual who is almost completely non-violent, he can put out the conflagration. In this age of democracy, however, it is essential that desired results are achieved by the collective effort of the people. It will no doubt be good to achieve an objective through the effort of a supremely powerful individual, but it can never make the community conscious of its corporate strength. An individual's success will be like a millionaire doling free food to millions of starving people. We should, therefore, bend our energies to a fulfilment of the thirteenfold constructive programme.

Harijan, 8-9-'40

10

FASTS

Fasting unto death is an integral part of *satyagraha* programme, and it is the greatest and most effective weapon in its armoury under given circumstances. Not every one is qualified for undertaking it without a proper course of training.

I may not burden this note with an examination of the circumstances under which fasting may be resorted to and the training required for it. Non-violence in its positive aspect as benevolence (I do not use the word love as it has fallen into disrepute) is the greatest force because of the limitless scope it affords for self-suffering without causing or intending any physical or material injury to the wrong-doer. The object always is to evoke the best in him. Self-suffering is an appeal to his better nature, as retaliation is to his baser. Fasting under proper circumstances is such an appeal par excellence. If the politician does not perceive its propriety in political matters, it is because it is a novel use of this very fine weapon.

Harijan, 26-7-'42

A *satyagrahi* should fast only as a last resort when all other avenues of redress have been explored and have failed. There is no room for imitation in fasts. He who has no inner strength should not dream of it, and never with attachment to success. But if a *satyagrahi* once undertakes a fast from conviction, he must stick to his resolve whether there is a chance of his action bearing fruit or not. This does not mean that fasting cannot or can bear fruit. He who fasts in the expectation of fruit generally fails. And even if he does not seemingly fail, he loses all the inner joy which a true fast holds.

It is wrong to fast for selfish ends, e.g. for increase in one's own salary. Under certain circumstances it is permissible to fast for an increase in wages on behalf of one's group.

Harijan, 21-4-'46

Fast is the last weapon in the armoury of the votary of *ahimsa*. When human ingenuity fails, the votary fasts. This fasting quickens the spirit of prayer, that is to say, the fasting is a spiritual act and, therefore, addressed to God. The effect of such action on the life of the people is that when the person fasting is at all known to them their sleeping conscience is awakened. But there is the danger that the people through mistaken sympathy may act against their will in order to save the life of the loved one. This danger has got to be faced. One ought not to be deterred from right action when one is sure of the rightness. It can but promote circumspection. Such a fast is undertaken in obedience to the dictates of the inner voice and, therefore, prevents haste.

Harijan, 21-12-'47

MEANS AND ENDS

The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree ; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree. I am not likely to obtain the result flowing from the worship of God by laying myself prostrate before Satan. If, therefore, anyone were to say : " I want to worship God ; it does not matter that I do so by means of Satan," it would be set down as ignorant folly. We reap exactly as we sow.

If I want to deprive you of your watch, I shall certainly have to fight for it ; if I want to buy your watch, I shall have to pay you for it ; and if I want a gift, I shall have to plead for it ; and according to the means I employ, the watch is stolen property, my own property or a donation. Thus we see three different results from three different means. Will you still say that means do not matter ?

Let us proceed a little further. A well-armed man has stolen your property ; you have harboured the thought of his act ; you are filled with anger ; you argue that you want to punish that rogue, not for your own sake, but for the good of your neighbours ; you have collected a number of armed men, you want to take his house by assault ; he is duly informed of it, he runs away ; he too is incensed. He collects his brother robbers, and sends you a defiant message that he will commit robbery in broad daylight. You are strong, you do not fear him, you are prepared to receive him. Meanwhile, the robber pesters your neighbours. They complain before you. You reply that you are doing all for their sake, you do not mind that your own goods have been stolen. Your neighbours reply that the robber never pestered them before, and that he commenced his depredations only after you declared hostilities against him. You are between Scylla and Charybdis.

You are full of pity for the poor men. What they say is true. What are you to do? You will be disgraced if you now leave the robber alone. You, therefore, tell the poor men; "Never mind. Come, my wealth is yours. I will give you arms. I will teach you how to use them; you should belabour the rogue; don't you leave him alone." And so the battle grows; the robbers increase in numbers; your neighbours have deliberately put themselves to inconvenience. Thus the result of wanting to take revenge upon the robber is that you have disturbed your own peace; you are in perpetual fear of being robbed and assaulted; your courage has given place to cowardice. If you will patiently examine the argument, you will see that I have not overdrawn the picture. This is one of the means.

Now let us examine the other. You set this armed robber down as an ignorant brother; you intend to reason with him at a suitable opportunity; you argue that he is, after all, a fellow man; you do not know what prompted him to steal. You, therefore, decide that, when you can, you will destroy the man's motive for stealing. Whilst you are thus reasoning with yourself, the man comes again to steal. Instead of being angry with him you take pity on him. You think that this stealing habit must be a disease with him. Henceforth, you, therefore, keep your doors and windows open, you change your sleeping place, and you keep your things in a manner most accessible to him. The robber comes again and is confused as all this is new to him; nevertheless, he takes away your things. But his mind is agitated. He inquires about you in the village, he comes to learn about your broad and loving heart; he repents, he begs your pardon, returns you your things, and leaves off the stealing habit. He becomes your servant, and you find for him honourable employment. This is the second method.

Thus, you see, different means have brought about totally different results. I do not wish to deduce from this that robbers will act in the above manner or that all

will have the same pity and love like you. I only wish to show that fair means alone can produce fair results, and that, at least in the majority of cases, if not indeed in all, the force of love and pity is infinitely greater than the force of arms. There is harm in the exercise of brute force, never in that of pity.

Hind Swaraj, chapter xvi

12

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

I am quite capable of recommending even punishment to wrong-doers under conceivable circumstances ; for instance, I would not hesitate under the present state of society to confine thieves and robbers, which is in itself a kind of punishment. But I would also admit that it is not Satyagraha, and that it is a fall from the pure doctrine. That would be an admission not of the weakness of the doctrine but the weakness of myself. I have no other remedy to suggest in such cases in the present state of society. I am therefore satisfied with advocating the use of prisons more as reformatories than as places of punishment.

But I would draw the distinction between killing and detention and corporal punishment. I think that there is a difference not merely in quantity but also in quality. I can recall the punishment of detention. I can make reparation to the man upon whom I inflict corporal punishment. But once a man is killed, the punishment is beyond recall or reparation. God alone can take life, because He alone gives it.

Young India, 8-10-'25

In independent India of the non-violent type. there will be crime but no criminals. They will not be punished. Crime is a disease like any other malady and is a product of the prevalent social system. Therefore, all crime including murder will be treated as a disease.

Whether such an India will ever come into being is another question.

Harijan, 5-5-'46

Q. What is the employer to do when an employee of his is addicted to stealing and is not amenable to correction whether it is by way of entreaty or the cane ?

A. My advice to the employer will be to remove all temptations in the way of the thief, to treat him as if he was his own brother and, when he refuses to yield to any treatment, however humanitarian it may be, to ask him to go his way. Let the employer always ask himself whether he would treat his own brother in the same way at the given stage.

Harijan, 21-7-'46

Speaking after the evening prayer at Uruli, Gandhiji said that instead of bearing ill-will towards a thief or a criminal and trying to get him punished they should try to get under his skin, understand the cause that had let him into crime and try to remedy it. They should, for instance, teach him a vocation and provide him with the means to make an honest living and thereby transform his life. They should realize that a thief or a criminal was not a different being from themselves. Indeed, if they turned the searchlight inward and closely looked into their own souls, they would find that the difference between them was only one of degree.

Harijan, 11-8-'46

Murder can never be avenged by either murder or taking compensation. The only way to avenge murder is to offer oneself as a willing sacrifice, with no desire for retaliation. Revenge or compensation may furnish some satisfaction to the individual, but I am quite definite that it can never restore peace to or uplift society.

Harijan, 18-8-'46

SATYAGRAHA OR NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE

Those who die unresistingly are likely to still the fury of violence by their wholly innocent sacrifice. But this truly non-violent action is not possible unless it springs from a heart belief that he whom you fear and regard as a robber, dacoit, or worse, and you are one, and that therefore, it is better that you die at his hands than that he, your ignorant brother, should die at yours.

Harijan, 29-6-'40

Congressmen have never seriously thought over the question of finding a non-violent way of quelling riots. Their non-violence was restricted to the sole purpose of offering civil resistance to the authorities. In my opinion the non-violence that goes so far and no further scarcely deserves the name *ahimsa*. You may, if you like, call it unarmed resistance. So far as it is a device for embarrassing the Government it is a species of *himsa*. To quell riots non-violently, there must be true *ahimsa* in one's heart, an *ahimsa* that takes even the erring hooligan in its warm embrace. Such an attitude can be cultivated. It can only come as a prolonged and patient effort which must be made during peaceful times. The would-be member of a peace brigade should come into close touch and cultivate acquaintance with the so-called *goonda* element in his vicinity. He should know all and be known to all and win the hearts of all by his living and selfless service. No section should be regarded as too contemptible or mean to mix with. *Goondas* do not drop from the sky, nor do they spring from the earth like evil spirits. They are the product of social disorganization, and society is therefore responsible for their existence. In other words, they should be looked upon as a symptom of corruption in our body politic. To remove the disease we must first

discover the underlying cause. To find the remedy will then be a comparatively easy task.

Harijan, 15-9-'40

The sword of the *satyagrahi* is love and the unshakable firmness that comes from it. He will regard as brothers the hundreds of *goondas* that confront him and instead of trying to kill them he will choose to die at their hands and thereby live.

This is straight and simple. But how can a solitary *satyagrahi* succeed in the midst of a huge population? Hundreds of hooligans were let loose on the city of Bombay for arson and loot. A solitary *satyagrahi* will be like a drop in the ocean. Thus argues the correspondent.

My reply is that a *satyagrahi* may never run away from danger, irrespective of whether he is alone or in the company of many. He will have fully performed his duty if he dies fighting. The same holds good in armed warfare. It applies with greater force in Satyagraha. Moreover, the sacrifice of one will evoke the sacrifice of many and may possibly produce big results. There is always this possibility. But one must scrupulously avoid the temptation of a desire for results.

Harijan, 17-3-'46

I adhere to my opinion that I did well to present to the Congress non-violence as an expedient. I could not have done otherwise, if I was to introduce it into politics. In South Africa too I introduced it as an expedient. It was successful there because resisters were a small number in a compact area and therefore easily controlled. Here we had numberless persons scattered over a huge country. The result was that they could not be easily controlled or trained. And yet it is a marvel the way they have responded. They might have responded much better and shown far better results. But I have no sense of disappointment in me over the results obtained. If I had started with men who accepted non-violence as a creed, I might

have ended with myself. Imperfect as I am, I started with imperfect men and women and sailed on an uncharted ocean. Thank God that, though the boat has not reached its haven, it has proved fairly stormproof.

Harijan, 12-4-'42

14

NON-VIOLENT POLICE

If we attain Swaraj by purely non-violent means, it should not be difficult for us to carry on the administration without the military. The *goondas* too will then have come under our control. If for instance, in Sevagram, we have five or seven *goondas* in a population of seven hundred who are non-violently organized, the five or seven will either live under the discipline of the rest or leave the village.

But truth makes me admit that we might have to maintain a police force. But the police will be after our pattern, and not the British pattern. If I maintain a police force, it will be a body of reformers.

Harijan, 25-8-'40

I have conceded that even in a non-violent State a police force may be necessary. This, I admit, is a sign of my imperfect *ahimsa*. I have not the courage to declare that we can carry on without a police force. Of course I can and do envisage a State where the police will not be necessary ; but whether we shall succeed in realizing it, the future alone will show.

The police of my conception will, however, be of a wholly different pattern from the present day force. Its ranks will be composed of believers in non-violence. They will be servants, not masters, of the people. The people will instinctively render them every help, and through mutual co-operation they will easily deal with the ever decreasing disturbances. The police force will have some

kind of arms, but they will be rarely used, if at all. In fact the policemen will be reformers. Their police work will be confined primarily to robbers and dacoits. Quarrels between labour and capital and strikes will be few and far between in a non-violent State, because the influence of the non-violent majority will be so great as to command the respect of the principal elements in society. Similarly there will be no room for communal disturbances.

Harijan, 1-9-'40

15

NON-VIOLENT ARMY

What you and I have to do is to show our *ahimsa* when there is rioting or similar disturbance. If every one of us, wherever he is, begins doing so there will come into being a non-violent army.

Harijan, 11-8-'40

The alphabet of *ahimsa* is best learnt in the domestic school, and I can say from experience that, if we secure success there, we are sure to do so everywhere else. For a non-violent person the whole world is one family. He will thus fear none, nor will others fear him. It will be retorted that those who satisfy such a test of non-violence will be few and far between. It is quite likely, but that is no reply to my proposition. Those who profess to believe in non-violence should know the implications of that belief. And if these scare them away, they are welcome to give up the belief. It is necessary that those who claim to believe in non-violence should know what is expected of them. If, as a result, the ranks of the non-violent army thin down, it should not matter. An army, however small, of truly non-violent soldiers is likely some day to multiply itself. An army of those who are not truly non-violent is never likely to yield any use whether it increases or decreases.

Let no one understand from the foregoing that a non-violent army is open only to those who strictly enforce in their lives all the implications of non-violence. It is open to all those who accept the implications and make an ever-increasing endeavour to observe them. There never will be an army of perfectly non-violent people. It will be formed of those who will honestly endeavour to observe non-violence.

Harijan, 21-7-'40

A non-violent army acts unlike armed men, as well in times of peace as of disturbances. They would be constantly engaged in constructive activities that make riots impossible. Theirs will be the duty of seeking occasions for bringing warring communities together, carrying on peace propaganda, engaging in activities that would bring and keep them in touch with every single person, male and female, adult and child, in their parish or division. Such an army should be ready to cope with any emergency, and in order to still the frenzy of mobs should risk their lives in numbers sufficient for the purpose. A few hundred, maybe a few thousand, such spotless deaths will once for all put an end to the riots. Surely a few hundred young men and women giving themselves deliberately to mob fury will be any day a cheaper and braver method of dealing with such madness than the display and use of the police and the military.

Harijan, 26-3-'38

Satyagraha brigades can be organized in every village and in every block of buildings in the cities. Each brigade should be composed of those persons who are well known to the organizers. In this respect Satyagraha differs from armed defence. For the latter the State impresses the service of everybody. For a Satyagraha brigade only those are eligible who believe in *ahimsa* and *satya*.

Therefore, an intimate knowledge of the persons enlisted is necessary for the organizers.

(Translated from Gujarati)

Harijan, 17-3-'46

1. A member of the peace brigade must have a living faith in non-violence. This is impossible without a living faith in God. A non-violent man can do nothing save by the power and grace of God. Without it he won't have the courage to die without anger, without fear and without retaliation. Such courage comes from the belief that God sits in the hearts of all, and that there should be no fear in the presence of God. The knowledge of the omnipresence of God also means respect for the lives of even those who may be called opponents or *goondas*. This contemplated intervention is a process of stilling the fury of man when the brute in him gets the mastery over him.

2. This messenger of peace must have equal regard for all the principal religions of the earth. Thus, if he is a Hindu, he will respect the other faiths current in India. He must, therefore, possess a knowledge of the general principles of the different faiths professed in the country.

3. Generally speaking this work of peace can only be done by local men in their own localities.

4. The work can be done singly or in groups. Therefore no one need wait for companions. Nevertheless one would naturally seek companions in one's own locality and form a local brigade.

5. This messenger of peace will cultivate, through personal service, contacts with the people in his locality or chosen circle, so that when he appears to deal with ugly situations, he does not descend upon the members of a riotous assembly as an utter stranger liable to be looked upon as a suspect or an unwelcome visitor.

6. Needless to say, a peace-bringer must have a character beyond reproach and must be known for his strict impartiality.

7. Generally there are previous warnings of coming storms. If these are known, the peace brigade will not wait till the conflagration breaks out, but will try to handle the situation in anticipation.

8. Whilst, if the movement spreads, it might be well if there are some whole-time workers, it is not absolutely necessary that there should be. The idea is to have as many good and true men and women as possible. These can be had only if volunteers are drawn from those who are engaged in various walks of life but have leisure enough to cultivate friendly relations with the people living in their circle and otherwise possess the qualifications required of a member of the peace brigade.

9. There should be a distinctive dress worn by the members of the contemplated brigade so that in course of time they will be recognized without the slightest difficulty.

These are but general suggestions. Each centre can work out its own constitution on the basis here suggested.

Harijan, 18-6-'38

Ordinarily, the efficient running of a large volunteer corps based on force implies the possibility of the use of force in the event of breach of discipline. In such bodies little or no stress is laid on a man's character. Physique is the chief factor. The contrary must obtain in non-violent bodies in which character or soul force must mean everything and physique must take second place. It is difficult to find many such persons. That is why non-violent corps must be small, if they are to be efficient. Such brigades may be scattered all over; there may be one each for a village or a *mohalla*. The members must know one another well. Each corps will select its own head. All the members will have the same status, but where every one is doing the same work there must be one person under whose discipline all must come, or else the work will suffer. Where there are two or more brigades the leaders must consult among themselves and decide

on a common line of action. In that way alone lies success.

If non-violent volunteer corps are formed on the above lines, they can easily stop trouble. These corps will not require all the physical training given in *akhadas*,* but a certain part of it will be necessary.

One thing, however, should be common to members of all such organizations and that is implicit faith in God. He is the only companion and doer. Without faith in Him these peace brigades will be lifeless. By whatever name one calls God, one must realize that one can only work through His strength. Such a man will never take another's life. He will allow himself, if need be, to be killed and thereby live through his victory over death.

The mind of the man in whose life the realization of this law has become a living reality will not be bewildered in a crisis. He will instinctively know the right way to act.

In spite, however, of what I have said above I would like to give some rules culled from my own experience :

1. A volunteer may not carry any weapons.
2. The members of a corps must be easily recognizable.
3. Every volunteer must carry bandages, scissors, needle and thread, surgical knife etc. for rendering first aid.
4. He should know how to carry and remove the wounded.
5. He should know how to put out fires, how to enter a fire area without getting burnt, how to climb heights for rescue work and descend safely with or without his charge.
6. He should be well acquainted with all the residents of his locality. This is a service in itself.
7. He should recite *Ramanama* † ceaselessly in his heart and persuade others who believe to do likewise.

* Physical culture institutes.

† The name of God.

There are many who, whether from mental laziness or from having fallen into a bad habit believe that God is and will help us unasked. Why then is it necessary to recite His name ? It is true that if God is, He is irrespective of our belief. But realization of God is infinitely more than mere belief. That can come only by constant practice. This is true of all science. How much more true of the science of all sciences ?

Man often repeats the name of God parrot-wise and expects fruit from so doing. The true seeker must have that living faith which will not only dispel the untruth of parrot-wise repetition from within him but also from the hearts of others.

(Translated from Gujarati)

Harijan, 5-5-'46

A very small part of the preliminary training received by the military is common to the non-violent army. These are discipline, drill, singing in chorus, flag hoisting, signalling and the like. Even this is not absolutely necessary and the basis is different. The positively necessary training for a non-violent army is an immovable faith in God, willing and perfect obedience to the chief of the non-violent army, and perfect inward and outward co-operation between the units of the army.

Harijan, 12-5-'46

“ We cannot visualize how you will stand non-violently against a foreign invasion.”

I cannot draw the whole picture to you because we have no past experience to fall back upon and there is no reality facing us today. We have got the Government army manned by the Sikhs, Pathans and Gurkhas. What I can conceive is that with my non-violent army of, say, two thousand people, I should put myself between the two contending armies. But this, I know, is no answer. I can only say that we shall be able to reduce the invader's violence to a minimum. The general of a non-violent

army has got to have greater presence of mind than that of a violent army, and God would bless him with the necessary resourcefulness to meet situations as they arise.

Let me explain what my army will be like. They need not and will not have the resourcefulness or understanding of the general, but they will have a perfect sense of discipline to carry out faithfully his orders. The general should have the quality which commands the unquestioning obedience of his army, and he will expect of them nothing more than this obedience. The Dandi March was entirely my conception. Pandit Motilalji first laughed at it, he thought it to be a quixotic adventure, and Jamnalalji suggested instead a march on the Viceroy's House! But I could not think of anything but the salt march as I had to think in terms of millions of our countrymen. It was a conception that God gave me. Pandit Motilalji argued for some time, and then he said he must not argue, as after all I was the general and he must have faith in me. Later when he saw me in Jambusar he was completely converted, for he saw with his own eyes the awakening that had come over the masses. And it was an almost magical awakening. Where in history shall we find parallels of the cool courage that our women displayed in such large numbers?

And yet none of the thousands who took part in the movement were above the average. They were erring, sinning mortals. God has a way of making use of the most fragile instruments.

What after all is the army that wins? You know Rama's reply to Vibhishana when the latter wondered how Rama would be able to conquer a foe like Ravana, when he had no chariot, no armour, nor any shoes to his feet? Rama says: *

"The chariot, my dear Vibhishana, that wins the victory for Rama is of a different sort from the usual one. Manliness and

* Gandhiji only made a reference to these verses from Tulsidas' *Ramayana*. They were translated fully for the benefit of the reader by M. D.

courage are its wheels ; unflinching truth and character its banners and standards ; strength, discrimination, self-restraint and benevolence its horses, with forgiveness, mercy, equanimity their reins ; prayer to God is that conqueror's unerring charioteer, dispassion his shield, contentment his sword, charity his axe, intellect his spear, and perfect science his stout bow. His pure and unwavering mind stands for a quiver, his mental quietude and his practice of *yama* and *niyama* stand for the sheaf of arrows, and the homage he pays to Brahmans and his *guru* is his impenetrable armour. There is no other equipment for victory comparable to this ; and, my dear friend, there is no enemy who can conquer the man who takes his stand on the chariot of *dharma*. He who has a powerful chariot like this is a warrior who can conquer even that great and invincible enemy — the world. Hearken unto me and fear not."

That is the equipment that can lead us to victory.

Harijan, 25-8-'40

A non-violent man or society does not anticipate or provide for attacks from without. On the contrary, such a person or society firmly believes that nobody is going to disturb them. If the worst happens, there are two ways open to non-violence. To yield possession, but non-co-operate with the aggressor. Thus supposing that a modern edition of Nero descended upon India, the representatives of the State, will let him in, but tell him that he will get no assistance from the people. They will prefer death to submission. The second way would be non-violent resistance by the people who have been trained in the non-violent way. They would offer themselves unarmed as fodder for the aggressor's cannons. The underlying belief in either case is that even a Nero is not devoid of a heart. The unexpected spectacle of endless rows upon rows of men and women simply dying rather than surrender to the will of an aggressor must ultimately melt him and his soldiery. Practically speaking there will be probably no greater loss in men than if forcible resistance was offered ; there will be no expenditure in armaments and fortifications. The non-violent training received by the people will add inconceivably to their moral height.

Such men and women will have shown personal bravery of a type far superior to that shown in armed warfare. In each case the bravery consists in dying, not in killing. Lastly, there is no such thing as defeat in non-violent resistance. That such a thing has not happened before is no answer to my speculation. I have drawn no impossible picture. History is replete with instances of individual non-violence of the type I have mentioned. There is no warrant for saying or thinking that a group of men and women cannot by sufficient training act non-violently as a group or nation. Indeed the sum total of the experience of mankind is that men somehow or other live on — from which fact I infer that it is the law of love that rules mankind. Had violence, i.e. hate, ruled us, we should have become extinct long ago. And yet the tragedy of it is that the so-called civilized men and nations conduct themselves as if the basis of society was violence. It gives me ineffable joy to make experiments proving that love is the supreme and only law of life. Much evidence to the contrary cannot shake my faith. Even the mixed non-violence of India has supported it. But if it is not enough to convince an unbeliever, it is enough to incline a friendly critic to view it with favour.

Harijan. 13-4-'40

The Congress Working Committee were of opinion that, while it might be possible for us to exercise *ahimsa* in internal disturbances, India has not the strength to exercise *ahimsa* against the invasion of a foreign foe. This their want of faith has distressed me. I do not believe that the unarmed millions of India cannot exercise *ahimsa* with success in this wide field.

Congressmen should train themselves to defend their country with a non-violent army. This is an entirely new experiment. But who, save the Congress, is to try it — the Congress which has tried it successfully in one field? It is my unshakable faith that, if we have a sufficient

number of non-violent soldiers, we are sure to succeed even in this new field, apart from the saving of the needless waste of crores of rupees. -

Harijan, 13-7-'40

Japan is knocking at our gates. What are we to do in a non-violent way? If we were a free country, things could be done non-violently to prevent the Japanese from entering the country. As it is, non-violent resistance could commence the moment they effected a landing. Thus non-violent resisters would refuse them any help, even water. For it is no part of their duty to help anyone to steal their country. But if a Japanese had missed his way and was dying of thirst and sought help as a human being, a non-violent resister, who may not regard anyone as his enemy, would give water to the thirsty one. Suppose the Japanese compel resisters to give them water, the resisters must die in the act of resistance. It is conceivable that they will exterminate all resisters. The underlying belief in such non-violent resistance is that the aggressor will, in time, be mentally and even physically tired of killing non-violent resisters. He will begin to search what this new (for him) force is which refuses co-operation without seeking to hurt, and will probably desist from further slaughter. But the resisters may find that the Japanese are utterly heartless and that they do not care how many they kill. The non-violent resisters will have won the day inasmuch as they will have preferred extermination to submission.

Harijan, 12-4-'42

Q. In this ideal State (there is no doubt that it is ideal) how can one be sure that outside aggression can be avoided? If the State has no modern army with modern weapons which are the product of the machine age, an invading army with modern weapons could overrun the country and subject the inhabitants to slavery.

A. The questioner, who claims to have read and re-read my article carefully and says he has liked it and is a military man, has evidently missed the central point of my article, viz. that however small a nation or even a group may be, it is able, even as the individual, provided that it has one mind as also the will and the grit, to defend its honour and self-respect against a whole world in arms. Therein consists the matchless strength and beauty of the unarmed. That is non-violent defence which neither knows nor accepts defeat at any stage. Therefore, a nation or a group which has made non-violence its final policy, cannot be subjected to slavery even by the atom bomb.

Harijan, 18-8-'46

Q. Is it possible for a modern State (which is essentially based on force) to offer non-violent resistance for countering internal as well as external forces of disorder ?

A. It is not possible for a modern State based on force, non-violently to resist forces of disorder, whether external or internal. A man cannot serve God and Mammon, nor be 'temperate and furious' at the same time.

Q. Does not the knowledge that the opponent is wedded to non-violence often encourage the bully ?

A. The bully has his opportunity when he has to face non-violence of the weak. Non-violence of the strong is any day stronger than that of the bravest soldier fully armed or a whole host.

Q. Is not non-violent resistance by the militarily strong more effective than that by the militarily weak ?

A. This is a contradiction in terms. There can be no non-violence offered by the militarily strong. Thus, Russia in order to express non-violence has to discard all her power of doing violence. What is true is that if those, who were at one time strong in armed might, change their mind, they will be better able to demonstrate their non-violence to the world and, therefore, also to their opponents.

Harijan, 12-5-'46

"How do you think that the masses can practise non-violence, when we know that they are all prone to anger, hate, ill-will? They are known to fight for the most trivial things."

"They are, and yet I think they can practise non-violence for the common good. Do you think the thousands of women that collected contraband salt had ill-will against anyone? They knew that the Congress or Gandhi had asked them to do certain things, and they did those things in faith and hope. To my mind the most perfect demonstration of non-violence was in Champaran. Did the thousands of ryots who rose up in revolt against the agrarian evils harbour the least ill-will against the Government or the planters? Their belief in non-violence was unintelligent, even as the belief in the earth being round with many is unintelligent. But their belief in their leaders was genuine, and that was enough. With those who lead it is another matter. Their belief has got to be intelligent, and they have to live up to all the implications of the belief."

Harijan, 4-11-'39

Critics can reasonably argue that the non-violence pictured by me is not possible for masses of mankind, it is possible only for the very highly developed persons. I have combated that view and suggested that, given proper training and proper generalship, non-violence can be practised by masses of mankind.

Harijan, 17-12-'38

ARMS AND MILITARY UNDER SWARAJ

Under Swaraj of my dream there is no necessity for arms at all. But I do not expect that dream to materialize in its fulness as a result of the present effort, first because the effort is not directed to that end as an immediate goal,

and secondly because I do not consider myself advanced enough to prescribe a detailed course of conduct to the nation for such preparation. I am still myself too full of passion and other frailties of human nature to feel the call or the capacity. All I claim for myself is that I am incessantly trying to overcome every one of my weaknesses. I have attained great capacity, I believe, for suppressing and curbing my senses, but I have not become incapable of sin, i.e. of being acted upon by the senses. I believe it to be possible for every human being to attain that blessed and indescribable sinless state in which he feels within himself the presence of God to the exclusion of everything else. It is, I must confess, as yet a distant scene. And therefore it is not possible for me to show the nation a present way to complete non-violence in practice.

Young India, 17-11-'21

I have not the capacity for preaching universal non-violence to the country. I preach, therefore, non-violence restricted strictly to the purpose of winning our freedom and therefore perhaps for preaching the regulation of international relations by non-violent means. But my incapacity must not be mistaken for that of the doctrine of non-violence. I see it with my intellect in all its effulgence. My heart grasps it. But I have not yet the attainment for preaching universal non-violence with effect. I am not advanced enough for the great task. I have yet anger within me, I have yet the *dwaitabhava* — duality — in me. I can regulate my passions, I keep them under subjection, but before I can preach universal non-violence with effect, I must be wholly free from passions. I must be wholly incapable of sin. Let the revolutionary pray with and for me that I may soon become that. But meanwhile let him take with me the one step to it which I see as clearly as daylight, i.e. to win India's freedom with strictly non-violent means. And then under Swaraj you

ARMS AND MILITARY UNDER SWARAJ

and I shall have a disciplined intelligent educated police force that would keep order within and fight raiders from without, if by that time I or someone else does not show a better way of dealing with either.

Young India, 7-5-'25

For the Poles to stand valiantly against the German hordes vastly superior in numbers, military equipment and strength, was almost non-violence. I should not mind repeating that statement over and over again. You must give its full value to the word 'almost'. But we are 400 millions here. If we were to organize a big army and prepare ourselves to fight foreign aggression, how could we by any stretch of imagination call ourselves almost non-violent, let alone non-violent? The Poles were unprepared for the way in which the enemy swooped down upon them. When we talk of armed preparation, we contemplate preparation to meet any violent combination with our superior violence. If India ever prepared herself that way, she would constitute the greatest menace to world peace. For, if we take that path, we will also have to choose the path of exploitation like the European nations.

Harijan, 25-8-'40

If Free India has to sustain the present military expenditure, it will bring no relief to the famishing millions.

Harijan, 9-6-'46

Gandhiji in his post-prayer address said that he was convinced that unless India developed her non-violent strength, she had gained nothing either for herself or for the world. Militarization of India would mean her own destruction as well as of the whole world.

Harijan, 14-12-'47

MILITARY TRAINING

Whilst even as an out and out believer in *ahimsa* I can understand and appreciate military training for those who believe in the necessity of the use of arms on given occasions, I am unable to advocate the military training of the youth of the country under the Government so long as it remains utterly irresponsible to the needs of the people ; and I should be against compulsory military training in every case and even under a national Government. Those who do not wish to take the military training should not be debarred from joining public universities. Physical culture stands on a different basis altogether. It can be and should be part of any sound educational scheme even as many other subjects are.

Young India, 24-9-'25

If there was a national Government, whilst I should not take any direct part in any war, I can conceive occasions when it would be my duty to vote for the military training of those who wish to take it. For I know that all its members do not believe in non-violence to the extent I do. It is not possible to make a person or a society non-violent by compulsion.

Young India, 13-9-'28

I think that the people of this land would not take to arms easily even though conscription may be resorted to. In any event arming of the millions, or even a few, is outside my province. It is repugnant to me. But what I would conscript is productive labour, skilled and unskilled. This, I hold would be the easiest and the most effective method of organizing society on a peaceful footing.

Harijan, 3-2-'40

WAR OR PEACE

No war of which history has any record took so many lives as this did. Moral loss was greater still. Poisonous forces destructive of the soul (lying and deception) were brought to perfection as much as the forces destructive of the body. The moral results have been as terrible as the physical. It is yet too early to measure the effect on mankind of the collapse of the sexual morality brought about by the War. Vice has usurped the throne of virtue. The brute in man has for the time being gained supremacy.

The after-effects are, perhaps, more terrible than the actual and immediate effects. There is no stability about the Government of any single State of Europe. No class is satisfied with its own condition. Each wants to better it at the expense of the rest. War between the States has now become a war within each State.

India has to make her choice. She may try, if she wishes, the way of war and sink lower than she has. In the Hindu-Muslim quarrel she seems to be taking her first lesson in the art of war. If India can possibly gain her freedom by war, her state will be no better and will be probably much worse than that of France or England.

But the way of peace is open to her. Her freedom is assured if she has patience. That way will be found to be the shortest even though it may appear to be the longest to our impatient nature. The way of peace insures internal growth and stability. We reject it because we fancy that it involves submission to the will of the ruler who has imposed himself upon us. But the moment we realize that the imposition is only so called and that, through our unwillingness to suffer loss of life or property, we are party to the imposition, all we need do is to change that negative attitude of passive endorsement. The

suffering to be undergone by the change will be nothing compared to the physical suffering and the moral loss we must incur in trying the way of war. And the sufferings of war harm both the parties. The sufferings in following the way of peace must benefit both. They will be like the pleasurable travail of a new birth.

The way of peace is the way of truth. Truthfulness is even more important than peacefulness. Indeed, lying is the mother of violence. A truthful man cannot long remain violent. He will perceive in the course of his search that he has no need to be violent, and he will further discover that so long as there is the slightest trace of violence in him, he will fail to find the truth he is searching.

Young India, 20-5-'26

19

WHY I ASSISTED IN WAR

I do believe that, where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence. Thus when my eldest son asked me what he should have done, had he been present when I was almost fatally assaulted in 1908, whether he should have run away and seen me killed or whether he should have used his physical force which he could and wanted to use, and defended me, I told him that it was his duty to defend me even by using violence. Hence it was that I took part in the Boer War, the so-called Zulu Rebellion and the late War. Hence also do I advocate training in arms for those who believe in the method of violence. I would rather have India resort to arms in order to defend her honour than that she would, in a cowardly manner, become or remain a helpless witness to her own dishonour.

But I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence.

Young India, 11-8-'20

I felt that Indians residing in England ought to do their bit in the war. English students had volunteered to serve in the army, and Indians might do no less. A number of objections were taken to this line of argument. There was, it was contended, a world of difference between the Indians and the English. We were slaves and they were masters. How could a slave co-operate with a master in the hour of the latter's need? Was it not the duty of the slave, seeking to be free, to make the master's need his opportunity? This argument failed to appeal to me then. I knew the difference of status between an Indian and an Englishman, but I did not believe that we have been quite reduced to slavery. I felt then that it was more the fault of individual British officials than of the British system, and that we could convert them by love. If we would improve our status through the help and co-operation of the British, it was our duty to win their help by standing by them in their hour of need. Though the system was faulty, it did not seem to me to be intolerable, as it does today. But if, having lost my faith in the system, I refuse to co-operate with the British Government today, how could those friends then do so, having lost their faith not only in the system but in the officials as well?

The opposing friends felt that that was the hour for making a bold declaration of Indian demands and for improving the status of Indians.

I thought that England's need should not be turned into our opportunity, and that it was more becoming and far-sighted not to press our demands while the war lasted. I therefore adhered to my advice and invited those who would to enlist as volunteers. There was a good response, practically all the provinces and all the religions being represented among the volunteers.

Autobiography, Part IV, chap. 38

Not only did I offer my services at the time of the Zulu Revolt but before that, at the time of the Boer War,

and not only did I raise recruits in India during the late war, but I raised an ambulance corps in 1914 in London. If, therefore, I have sinned, the cup of my sins is full to the brim. I lost no occasion of serving the Government at all times. Two questions presented themselves to me during all those crises. What was my duty as a citizen of the empire as I then believed myself to be, and what was my duty as an out-and-out believer in the religion of *ahimsa* — non-violence ?

I know now that I was wrong in thinking that I was a citizen of the empire. But on those four occasions I did honestly believe that, in spite of the many disabilities that my country was labouring under, it was making its way towards freedom, and that on the whole the Government from the popular standpoint was not wholly bad, and that the British administrators were honest though insular and dense. Holding that view, I set about doing what an ordinary Englishman would do in the circumstances. I was not wise or important enough to take independent action. I had no business to judge or scrutinize ministerial decisions with the solemnity of a tribunal. I did not impute malice to the ministers either at the time of the Boer War, the Zulu Revolt or the late war. I did not consider Englishmen, nor do I now consider them, as particularly bad or worse than other human beings. I considered and still consider them to be as capable of high motives and actions as any other body of men, and equally capable of making mistakes. I therefore felt that I sufficiently discharged my duty as a man and a citizen by offering my humble services to the empire in the hour of its need whether local or general. That is how I would expect every Indian to act by his country under Swaraj. I should be deeply distressed, if on every conceivable occasion every one of us were to be a law unto oneself and to scrutinize in golden scales every action of our future National Assembly. I would surrender my judgment in most matters to national representatives, taking particular care in making my choice of such representatives.

I know that in no other manner would a democratic government be possible for one single day.

The whole situation is now changed for me. My eyes, I fancy, are opened. Experience has made me wiser. I consider the existing system of government to be wholly bad and requiring special national effort to end or mend it. It does not possess within itself any capacity for self-improvement. That I still believe many English administrators to be honest does not assist me, because I consider them to be as blind and deluded as I was myself. Therefore I can take no pride in calling the empire mine or describing myself as a citizen. On the contrary, I fully realize that I am a *pariah* untouchable of the empire. I must, therefore, constantly pray for its radical reconstruction or total destruction, even as a Hindu *pariah* would be fully justified in so praying about Hinduism or Hindu society.

I was, again, an ordinary citizen no wiser than my fellows, myself believing in *ahimsa* and the rest not believing in it at all but refusing to do their duty of assisting the Government because they were actuated by anger and malice. They were refusing out of their ignorance and weakness. As a fellow worker it became my duty to guide them aright. I therefore placed before them their clear duty, explained the doctrine of *ahimsa* to them, and let them make their choice, which they did. I do not repent of my action in terms of *ahimsa*. For, under Swaraj too I would not hesitate to advise those who would bear arms to do so and fight for the country.

Young India, 17-11-'21

By enlisting men for ambulance-work in South Africa and in England, and recruits for field service in India, I helped not the cause of war, but I helped the institution called the British Empire in whose ultimate beneficial character I then believed. My repugnance to war was as strong then as it is today ; and I could not then have, and

would not have, shouldered a rifle. But one's life is not a single straight line ; it is a bundle of duties very often conflicting. And one is called upon continually to make one's choice between one duty and another. As a citizen not then, and not even now, but a reformer leading an agitation against the institution of war, I had to advise and lead men who believed in war but who, from cowardice or from base motives or from anger against the British Government, refrained from enlisting. I did not hesitate to advise them that, so long as they believed in war and professed loyalty to the British constitution, they were in duty bound to support it by enlistment. Though I do not believe in the use of arms, and though it is contrary to the religion of *ahimsa* which I profess, I should not hesitate to join an agitation for a repeal of the debasing Arms Act which I have considered amongst the blackest crimes of the British Government against India. I do not believe in retaliation, but I did not hesitate to tell the villagers near Bettiah four years ago that they who knew nothing of *ahimsa* were guilty of cowardice in failing to defend the honour of their womenfolk and their property by force of arms. And I have not hesitated, as the correspondent should know, only recently to tell the Hindus that, if they do not believe in out and out *ahimsa* and cannot practise it, they will be guilty of a crime against their religion and humanity, if they fail to defend by force of arms the honour of their women against any kidnapper who chooses to take away their women. And all this advice and my previous practice I hold to be not only consistent with my profession of the religion of *ahimsa* out and out, but a direct result of it. To state that noble doctrine is simple enough ; to know it and to practise it in the midst of a world full of strife, turmoil and passions, is a task whose difficulty I realize more and more day by day. And yet the conviction too that without it life is not worth living is growing daily deeper.

Young India, 5-11-'25

No doubt it was a mixed motive that prompted me to participate in war. Two things I can recall. Though as an individual I was opposed to war, I had no status for offering effective non-violent resistance. Non-violent resistance can only follow some real disinterested service, some heart-expression of love. For instance, I would have no status to resist a savage offering animal sacrifice until he could recognize in me his friend through some loving act of mine or other means. I do not sit in judgment upon the world for its many misdeeds. Being imperfect myself and needing toleration and charity, I tolerate the world's imperfections till I find or create an opportunity for fruitful expostulation. I felt that, if by sufficient service I could attain the power and the confidence to resist the Empire's wars and its warlike preparations, it would be a good thing for me, who was seeking to enforce non-violence in my own life, to test the extent to which it was possible among the masses.

The other motive was to qualify for Swaraj through the good offices of the statesmen of the Empire. I could not thus qualify myself except through serving the Empire in its life and death struggle. It must be understood that I am writing of my mentality in 1914 when I was a believer in the Empire and its willing ability to help India in her battle for freedom. Had I been the non-violent rebel that I am today, I should certainly not have helped, but through every effort open to non-violence I should have attempted to defeat its purpose.

Young India, 15-3-'28

Being a confirmed war-resister I have never given myself training in the use of destructive weapons in spite of opportunities to take such training. It was perhaps thus that I escaped direct destruction of human life. But so long as I lived under a system of government based on force and voluntarily partook of the many facilities and privileges it created for me, I was bound to help that Government to the extent of my ability when it was engaged

in a war, unless I non-co-operated with that Government and renounced to the utmost of my capacity the privileges it offered me.

Let me take an illustration. I am a member of an institution which holds a few acres of land whose crops are in imminent peril from monkeys. I believe in the sacredness of all life, and hence I regard it as breach of *ahimsa* to inflict any injury on the monkeys. But I do not hesitate to instigate and direct an attack on the monkeys in order to save the crops. I would like to avoid this evil. I can avoid it by leaving or breaking up the institution. I do not do so because I do not expect to be able to find a society where there will be no agriculture and therefore no destruction of some life. In fear and trembling, in humility and penance, I therefore participate in the injury inflicted on the monkeys, hoping some day to find a way out.

Even so did I participate in the three acts of war. I could not, it would be madness for me to, sever my connection with the society to which I belong. And on those three occasions I had no thought of non-co-operating with the British Government. My position regarding that Government is totally different today, and hence I should not voluntarily participate in its war, and I should risk imprisonment and even the gallows, if I was forced to take up arms or otherwise take part in its military operations.

Non-violence works in a most mysterious manner. Often a man's actions defy analysis in terms of non-violence; equally often his actions may wear the appearance of violence when he is absolutely non-violent in the highest sense of the term and is subsequently found so to be. All I can claim for my conduct is that it was, in the instances cited, actuated in the interests of non-violence. There was no thought of sordid national or other interest. I do not believe in the promotion of national or any other interest at the sacrifice of some other interest.

Young India, 13-9-'28

Whatever I have done was not done from expedience as we understand the term. I claim to have done every act described by me for the purpose of advancing the cause of peace. That does not mean that those acts really advanced the cause of peace. I am merely stating the fact that my motive was peace.

What is possible, however, is that I was then weak and am still too weak to perceive my error even as a blind man is unable to see what his neighbours are able to see. I observe daily how capable we are of utmost self-deception.

For the time being, however, I am not aware of my self-deception. What I feel is that I am looking at peace through a medium to which my European friends are strangers. I belong to a country which is compulsorily disarmed and has been held under subjection for centuries. My way of looking at peace may be necessarily different from theirs.

Let me take an illustration. Supposing that both cats and mice sincerely desire peace. Now cats will have to abjure war against mice. But how will mice promote peace? What will they abjure? Is their vote even necessary? Suppose further that some cats do not observe that pact arrived at by the assembly of cats and continue preying upon mice, what will mice do? There may be some wise heads among them, and they may say, 'We will offer ourselves a willing sacrifice till the cats are over-satisfied and find no fun in preying.' These will do well to propagate their cult. But what should be their attitude, peace-lovers though they are, towards the mice who would, instead of running away from their oppressors, decide to arm themselves and give battle to the enemy? The effort may be vain, but the wise mice whom I have imagined will, I apprehend, be bound to assist the mice in their desire to become bold and strong even whilst maintaining their attitude of peace. They will do so not out of policy but from the highest of motives. That is exactly my attitude.

Young India, 7-2-'29

Let the European war-resisters appreciate one vital difference between them and me. They do not represent exploited nations ; I represent the most exploited nation on earth. To use an unflattering comparison, they represent the cat and I represent the mouse. Has a mouse even the sense of non-violence ? Is it not a fundamental want with him to strive to offer successful violence before he can be taught to appreciate the virtue, the grandeur, the supremacy, of the law of non-violence — *ahimsa* — in the field of war ? May it not be necessary for me, as a representative of the mouse tribe, to participate in my principal's desire for wreaking destruction even for the purpose of teaching him the superiority of non-destruction ?

Here the analogy of the cat and the mouse ends. A human being, however debased or fallen he may be, has in him the capacity of rising to the greatest height ever attained by any human being irrespective of race or colour. Therefore, even whilst I may go with my countrymen a long way in satisfying their need for preparation for war, I should do so in the fullest hope of weaning them from war and of their seeing one day its utter futility. Let it be remembered that the largest experiment known to history in mass non-violence is being tried by me even as I seem to be lending myself for the purpose of war. For want of skill the experiment may fail. But the war-resister in Europe should strain every nerve to understand and appreciate the phenomenon going on before him in India of the same man trying the bold experiment in non-violence whilst hobnobbing with those who would prepare for war.

Young India, 9-5-'29

Indeed life is made of such compromises. *Ahimsa*, simply because it is purest, unselfish love, often demands such compromises. The conditions are imperative. There should be no self in one's action, no fear, no untruth, and it must be in furtherance of the cause of *ahimsa*. The

compromise must be natural to oneself, not imposed from without.

Harijan, 17-10-'36

Fellow war-resisters in the West are participants in war even in peace time inasmuch as they pay for the preparations that are being made for it and otherwise sustain governments whose main occupation is such preparation. Again, all activity for stopping war must prove fruitless so long as the causes of war are not understood and radically dealt with. Is not the prime cause of modern wars the inhuman race for exploitation of the so-called weaker races of the earth ?

Young India, 9-5-'29

Merely to refuse military service is not enough. To refuse to render military service when the particular time arrives is to do the thing after all the time for combating the evil is practically gone. Military service is only a symptom of the disease which is deeper. I suggest to you that those who are not on the register of the military service are equally participating in the crime if they support the State otherwise. He or she who supports a State organized in the military way — whether directly or indirectly — participates in the sin. Each man old or young takes part in the sin by contributing to the maintenance of the State by paying the taxes. That is why I said to myself during the war that, so long as I ate wheat supported by the army whilst I was doing everything short of being a soldier, it was best for me to enlist in the army and be shot ; otherwise I should retire to mountains and eat food grown by nature. Therefore all those who want to stop military service can do so by withdrawing all co-operation. Refusal of military service is much more superficial than non-co-operation with the whole system which supports the State. But then one's opposition becomes so swift and so effective that you run the risk of

not only being marched to jail, but of being thrown into the streets.

Young India, 31-12-'31

Whilst all violence is bad and must be condemned in the abstract, it is permissible for, it is even the duty of, a believer in *ahimsa* to distinguish between the aggressor and the defender. Having done so, he will side with the defender in a non-violent manner, i.e. give his life in saving him. His intervention is likely to bring a speedier end to the duel, and may even result in bringing about peace between the combatants.

Harijan, 21-10-'39

If war is itself a wrong act, how can it be worthy of moral support or blessings? I believe all war to be wholly wrong. But if we scrutinize the motives of two warring parties, we may find one to be in the right and the other in the wrong. For instance, if A wishes to seize B's country, B is obviously the wronged one. Both fight with arms. I do not believe in violent warfare, but all the same, B, whose cause is just, deserves my moral help and blessings.

Harijan, 18-8-'40

The critic might retort that then I would be helping the Allies and thereby taking part in violence. The retort would be reasonable but for the fact that the additional help that Britain would gain from the Congress would be purely moral. The Congress would contribute neither men nor money. The moral influence would be used on the side of peace. I have already said in these columns that my non-violence does recognize different species of violence—defensive and offensive. It is true that in the long run the difference is obliterated, but the initial merit persists. A non-violent person is bound, when the occasion arises, to say which side is just. Thus I wished success to the Abyssinians, the Spaniards, the Czechs, the

Chinese and the Poles, though in each case I wished that they could have offered non-violent resistance. In the present case, if the Congress could justify the British case on the high ground professed by Mr. Chamberlain, India declared free would throw in her whole moral weight on the side of peace. The part I am playing is, in my opinion, strictly non-violent.

Harijan, 9-12-'39

20

NON-VIOLENCE BETWEEN NATIONS

When the position is examined in terms of non-violence, I must say it is unbecoming of a great nation of 400 millions, a nation as cultured as China, to repel Japanese aggression by resorting to Japan's own methods. If the Chinese had non-violence of my conception, there would be no use left for the latest machinery for destruction which Japan possesses. The Chinese would say to Japan, 'Bring all your machinery, we present half of our population to you. But the remaining 200 millions won't bend their knee to you.' If the Chinese did that, Japan would become China's slave.

Harijan, 24-12-'38

You will develop love for the Japanese in your hearts. You will examine yourself whether you can really love them, whether you have not some ill-will towards them for all the harm they are doing. It is not enough to love them by remembering their virtues. You must be able to love them in spite of all their misdeeds. If you have that love for the Japanese in your hearts, you will proceed to exhibit in your conduct that higher form of courage which is the hall-mark of true non-violence and which your Chinese friends will not fail to detect and recognize as such. You will not wish success to Japanese arms because you 'love' the Japanese. At the same time

you will not pray for the success of the Chinese arms. It is very difficult to judge, when both sides are employing weapons of violence, which side 'deserves' to succeed. You will, therefore, pray only that the right should prevail. Whilst you will keep yourself aloof from all violence, you will not shirk danger. You will serve friend and foe alike with a reckless disregard for your life. You will rush forth if there is an outbreak of an epidemic or a fire to be combated, and distinguish yourself by your surpassing courage and non-violent heroism. But you will refuse to call the curses of heaven upon the Japanese. If by chance some Japanese soldiers or airmen fall into the hands of the Chinese and are in danger of being lynched by an infuriated Chinese mob or otherwise ill-treated, you will plead for them with your own people and, if necessary, even protect them with your life.

Your example will affect the Chinese, and might even shame some Japanese who will become bearers of your message among the Japanese.

"A very slow process," you will perhaps say. Yes, possibly, under the existing adverse circumstances to begin with. But it will gather momentum and speed in an incalculable manner as you proceed. I am an irrepressible optimist. My optimism rests on the belief in the infinite possibilities of the individual to develop non-violence. The more you develop it in your own being, the more infectious it becomes till it overwhelms your surroundings and by and by might oversweep the world.

Harijan, 28-1-'39

Q. How could a disarmed neutral country (like Switzerland) allow other nations to be destroyed? But for our army which was waiting ready at our frontier during the last war we should have been ruined.

A. At the risk of being considered a visionary or a fool I must answer this question in the only manner I know. It would be cowardly of a neutral country to allow an army to devastate a neighbouring country. But there

are two ways in common between soldiers of war and soldiers of non-violence, and if I had been a citizen of Switzerland and a President of the Federal State, what I would have done would be to refuse passage to the invading army by refusing all supplies. Secondly, by re-enacting a Thermopylae in Switzerland, you would have presented a living wall of men and women and children, and inviting the invaders to walk over your corpses. You may say that such a thing is beyond human experience and endurance. I say that it is not so. It was quite possible. Last year in Gujarat women stood *lathi* charges unflinchingly, and in Peshawar thousands stood hails of bullets without resorting to violence. Imagine these men and women staying in front of an army requiring a safe passage to another country. The army would be brutal enough to walk over them, you might say. I would then say, you will still have done your duty by allowing yourself to be annihilated. An army that dares to pass over the corpses of innocent men and women would not be able to repeat that experiment. You may, if you wish, refuse to believe in such courage on the part of the masses of men and women, but then you would have to admit that non-violence is made of sterner stuff. It was never conceived as a weapon of the weak, but of the stoutest hearts.

Young India, 31-12-'31

1. What could ill-armed Abyssinia do against well-armed Italy, if she were non-violent?

2. What could England, the greatest and the most powerful member of the League, do against determined Italy, if she (England) were non-violent in your sense of the term?

Before I answer the questions let me lay down five simple axioms of non-violence as I know it:

(a) Non-violence implies as complete self-purification as is humanly possible.

(b) Man for man the strength of non-violence is

in exact proportion to the ability, not the will, of the non-violent person to inflict violence.

(c) Non-violence is without exception superior to violence, i. e. the power at the disposal of a non-violent person is always greater than he would have if he was violent.

(d) There is no such thing as defeat in non-violence. The end of violence is surest defeat.

(e) The ultimate end of non-violence is surest victory — if such a term may be used of non-violence. In reality, where there is no sense of defeat, there is no sense of victory.

The foregoing questions may be answered in the light of these axioms.

1. If Abyssinia were non-violent, she would have no arms, would want none. She would make no appeal to the League or any other power for armed intervention. She would never give any cause for complaint. And Italy would find nothing to conquer if Abyssinians would not offer armed resistance, nor would they give co-operation willing or forced. Italian occupation in that case would mean that of the land without its people. That, however, is not Italy's exact object. She seeks submission of the people of that beautiful land.

2. If Englishmen were as a nation to become non-violent at heart, they would shed imperialism, they would give up the use of arms. The moral force generated by such an act of renunciation would stagger Italy into willing surrender of her designs. England would then be a living embodiment of the axioms I have laid down. The effect of such conversion would mean the greatest miracle of all ages. And yet if non-violence is not an idle dream, some such thing has some day to come to pass somewhere. I live in that faith.

Harijan, 12-10-'35

What to do with 'gangster' nations, if I may use the expression frequently used? There was individual

gangsterism in America. It has been put down by strong police measures both local and national. Could not we do something similar for gangsterism between nations, as instanced in Manchuria—the nefarious use of the opium poison, in Abyssinia, in Spain, in the sudden seizure of Austria, and then the case of Czechoslovakia?

If the best minds of the world have not imbibed the spirit of non-violence, they would have to meet gangsterism in the orthodox way. But that would only show that we have not got far beyond the law of the jungle, that we have not yet learnt to appreciate the heritage that God has given us, that in spite of the teaching of Christianity which is 1900 years old and of Hinduism and Buddhism which are older, and even of Islam (if I have read it aright), we have not made much headway as human beings. But whilst I would understand the use of force by those who have not the spirit of non-violence in them, I would have those who know non-violence to throw their whole weight in demonstrating that even gangsterism has to be met by non-violence. For, ultimately, force, however justifiably used, will lead us into the same morass as the force of Hitler and Mussolini. There will be just a difference of degree. You and I who believe in non-violence must use it at the critical moment. We may not despair of touching the hearts even of gangsters, even if, for the moment, we may seem to be striking our heads against a blind wall.

Harijan, 10-12-'38

Says a comforter, "Hitler knows no pity. Your spiritual effort will avail nothing before him."

My answer is: "You may be right. History has no record of a nation having adopted non-violent resistance. If Hitler is unaffected by my suffering, it does not matter. For I shall have lost nothing worth. My honour is the only thing worth preserving. That is independent of Hitler's pity. But as a believer in non-violence I may not limit its possibilities. Hitherto he and his likes have built upon their invariable experience that men yield to force.

Unarmed men, women and children offering non-violent resistance without any bitterness in them will be a novel experience for them. Who can dare say it is not in their nature to respond to the higher and finer forces? They have the same soul that I have."

Harijan, 15-10-'38

How can non-violence combat aerial warfare, seeing that there are no personal contacts? The reply to this is that behind the death-dealing bomb there is the human hand that releases it, and behind that still is the human heart that sets the hand in motion. And at the back of the policy of terrorism is the assumption that terrorism if applied in a sufficient measure will produce the desired result, namely, bend the adversary to the tyrant's will. But supposing a people make up their mind that they will never do the tyrant's will, nor retaliate with the tyrant's own methods, the tyrant will not find it worth his while to go on with his terrorism. If sufficient food is given to the tyrant, a time will come when he will have had more than surfeit. If all the mice in the world held conference together and resolved that they would no more fear the cat but all run into her mouth, the mice would live. I have actually seen a cat play with a mouse. She did not kill it outright but held it between her jaws, then released it, and again pounced upon it as soon as it made an effort to escape. In the end the mouse died out of sheer fright. The cat would have derived no sport, if the mouse had not tried to run away. I learnt the lesson of non-violence from my wife, when I tried to bend her to my will. Her determined resistance to my will on the one hand, and her quiet submission to the suffering my stupidity involved on the other, ultimately made me ashamed of myself, and cured me of my stupidity in thinking that I was born to rule over her, and in the end she became my teacher in non-violence. And what I did in South Africa was but an extension of the rule of Satyagraha which she unwillingly practised in her own person.

But one of the visitors objected : " You do not know Hitler and Mussolini. They are incapable of any kind of moral response. They have no conscience, and they have made themselves impervious to world opinion. Would it not be playing into the hands of these dictators if, for instance, the Czechs, following your advice, confronted them with non-violence ? Seeing that dictatorships are unmoral by definition, would the law of moral conversion hold good in their case ? "

" Your argument," replied Gandhiji, " presupposes that the dictators like Mussolini or Hitler are beyond redemption. But belief in non-violence is based on the assumption that human nature in its essence is one and therefore unfailingly responds to the advances of love. It should be remembered that they have up to now always found ready response to the violence that they have used. Within their experience, they have not come across organized non-violent resistance on an appreciable scale, if at all. Therefore it is not only highly likely, but I hold it to be inevitable, that they would recognize the superiority of non-violent resistance over any display of violence that they may be capable of putting forth. Moreover the non-violent technique that I have presented to the Czechs does not depend for its success on the goodwill of the dictators, for, a non-violent resister depends upon the unfailing assistance of God which sustains him throughout difficulties which would otherwise be considered insurmountable. His faith makes him indomitable."

The visitor retorted that these dictators wisely refrain from using force, but simply take possession of what they want. In the circumstances what can non-violent resisters do ?

" Suppose," replied Gandhiji, " they come and occupy mines, factories and all sources of natural wealth belonging to the Czechs, then the following results can take place : (1) The Czechs may be annihilated for disobedience to orders. That would be a glorious victory for the

Czechs and the beginning of the fall of Germany. (2) The Czechs might become demoralized in the presence of overwhelming force. This is a result common in all struggles. But if demoralization does take place, it would not be on account of non-violence, but it would be due to absence or inadequacy of non-violence. (3) The third thing that can take place is that Germany might use her new possessions for occupation by her surplus population. This, again, could not be avoided by offering violent resistance, for we have assumed that violent resistance is out of the question. Thus non-violent resistance is the best method under all conceivable circumstances.

Harijan, 24-12-'38

Herr Hitler is but one man enjoying no more than the average span of life. He would be a spent force, if he had not the backing of his people. I do not despair of his responding to human suffering even though caused by him. But I must refuse to believe that the Germans as a nation have no heart or markedly less than the other nations of the earth. They will some day or other rebel against their own adored hero, if he does not wake up betimes.

An armed conflict may bring disaster to German arms ; it cannot change the German heart even as the last defeat did not. It produced a Hitler vowed to wreak vengeance on the victors. And what a vengeance it is ! My answer, therefore, must be the answer that Stephenson gave to his fellow-workers who had despaired of ever filling the deep pit that made the first railway possible. He asked his co-workers of little faith to have more faith and go on filling the pit. It was not bottomless, it must be filled. Even so I do not despair because Herr Hitler's or the German heart has not yet melted. On the contrary I plead for more suffering and still more till the melting has become visible to the naked eye.

Harijan, 7-1-'39

"Are the British easier to deal with than any other people?"

"They are as easy, in terms of non-violence, to deal with as anyone else. But not having dealt with anyone else I cannot say from practical experience. All conquerors of India have reacted to what is noble in Indian culture and in Indian nature, the Muslims included. I believe the Germans would have done likewise. It may even be that the English reaction has been less than what others' may have been because of their insularity and colour prejudice."

Harijan, 13-4-'40

1. Non-violent resistance can only be effective in resisting people who are capable of being moved by moral and humanitarian considerations. Fascism not only is not moved by such considerations, but openly scoffs at them as signs of weakness. It has no scruple in wiping out all resistance, and in employing any degree of brutality in order to do so. Non-violent resistance, therefore, stands no chance whatever against Fascism. Non-violent resistance is, therefore, hopelessly impractical in present conditions.

2. To refuse co-operation in violent resistance (i.e. to be a C.O. in case of war or conscription) in defence of democratic liberty is tantamount to helping those who are destroying that liberty. Fascist aggression has undoubtedly been encouraged by the knowledge that the democracies contain numbers of people who are unwilling to fight in their defence, and who would even oppose (and thus obstruct) their own governments if war breaks out or some sort of conscription is enforced. This being so, the conscientious objector to violent means of defence becomes not merely ineffective in promoting peace, but actually helpful to those who are breaking it.

3. War may destroy liberty, but if the democracies survive, there is at least some possibility of regaining part of it; whereas if the Fascists are allowed to rule the world, there is no chance at all. Conscientious objectors by weakening the democratic forces are helping the opposers, and thus defeating their own object.

The first argument, if it is valid, cuts at the very root of the anti-war movement, which is based on the assumption that it is possible to convert Fascists and Nazis. They

belong to the same species as the so-called democracies or, better still, war-resisters themselves. They show in their family circles the same tenderness, affection, consideration and generosity that war-resisters are likely to show even outside such circles. The difference is only of degree. Indeed Fascists and Nazis are a revised edition of so-called democracies, if they are not an answer to the latter's misdeeds. Kirby Page in his brochure on the toll of the late war has shown that both the combatants were guilty of falsehoods, exaggerations and inhumanities. The Versailles Treaty was a treaty of revenge against Germany by the victors. The so-called democracies have before now misappropriated other people's lands and have resorted to ruthless repression. What wonder if Messrs. Hitler & Co. have reduced to a science the unscientific violence their predecessors had developed for exploiting the so-called backward races for their own material gain? It is, therefore, a matter of rule of three to find out the exact amount of non-violence required to melt the harder hearts of the Fascists and the Nazis, if it is assumed, as it is, that the so-called democracies melt before a given amount of non-violence. Therefore, we must eliminate from consideration the first argument, which would be fatal if it could be proved to have any content in it.

The other two arguments are practical. The pacifists may not do anything to weaken their own governments so as to compel defeat. But for fear of so doing they may not miss the only effective chance they have of demonstrating their undying faith in the futility of all war. If their own governments go mad and make martyrs of war-resisters, they (the governments) must suffer the consequence of the unrest of their own creation. The democracies must respect the liberty of individual non-violent conscience, however inconvenient it may be. From that respect there will spring hope for the world. This means that they put their conscience and truth before their country's so-called interest. For, regard for one's conscience, if it is really such, has never yet injured any legitimate

cause or interest. Therefore, it comes to this that a pacifist must resist when he feels strongly that, whether so-called democracies live or die, the tug-of-war will never end war, and that it will only end when at the crucial moment a body of pacifists have at any cost testified their living faith by suffering, if need be, the extreme penalty. A true pacifist is a true *satyagrahi*. The latter acts by faith and therefore is not concerned about the result, for he knows that it is assured when the action is true.

After all, what is the gain if the so-called democracies win? War certainly will not end. Democracies will have adopted all the tactics of the Fascists and the Nazis, including conscription and all other forcible methods to compel and exact obedience. All that may be gained at the end of the victory is the possibility of comparative protection of individual liberty. But that protection does not depend upon outside help. It comes from the internal determination to protect it against the whole world. In other words, the true democrat is he who with purely non-violent means defends his liberty and therefore his country's and ultimately that of the whole of mankind.

Harijan, 15-4-'39

This war is showing the futility of violence. Supposing Hitler becomes victorious over the Allies, he will never subjugate England and France. It will mean another war. Supposing the Allies are victorious, the world will fare no better. They will be more polite but not less ruthless, unless they learnt the lesson of non-violence during the war and unless they shed the gains they have made through violence. The first condition of non-violence is justice all round in every department of life. Perhaps it is too much to expect of human nature. I do not, however, think so. No one should dogmatize about the capacity of human nature for degradation or exaltation.

Harijan, 4-5-'40

Whatever Hitler may ultimately prove to be, we know what Hitlerism has come to mean. It means naked ruthless force reduced to an exact science and worked with scientific precision. In its effect it becomes almost irresistible.

In the early days of Satyagraha when it was still known as passive resistance, *The Star* of Johannesburg, stirred by the sight of a handful of Indians, wholly unarmed and incapable of organized violence even if they wished it, pitting themselves against an overwhelmingly armed government, had a cartoon in which the latter was depicted as a steam-roller representing irresistible force, and passive resistance was depicted as an elephant unmoved and comfortably planting himself in his seat. This was marked immovable force. The cartoonist had a true insight into the duel between the irresistible and the immovable forces. It was then a stalemate. The sequel we know. What was depicted and appeared to be irresistible was successfully resisted by the immovable force of Satyagraha — call it suffering without retaliation.

What became true then can be equally true now. Hitlerism will never be defeated by counter-Hitlerism. It can only breed superior Hitlerism raised to the *n*th degree. What is going on before our eyes is a demonstration of the futility of violence as also of Hitlerism.

What will Hitler do with his victory? Can he digest so much power? Personally he will go as empty-handed as his not very remote predecessor Alexander. For the Germans he will have left not the pleasure of owning a mighty empire but the burden of sustaining its crushing weight. For they will not be able to hold all the conquered nations in perpetual subjection. And I doubt if the Germans of future generations will entertain unadulterated pride in the deeds for which Hitlerism will be deemed responsible. They will honour Herr Hitler as a genius, as a brave man, a matchless organizer, and much more. But I should hope that the Germans of the future will have learnt the art of discrimination even about their

heroes. Anyway I think it will be allowed that all the blood that has been spilled by Hitler has added not a millionth part of an inch to the world's moral stature.

As against this imagine the state of Europe today if the Czechs, the Poles, the Norwegians, the French and the English had all said to Hitler : " You need not make your scientific preparation for destruction. We will meet your violence with non-violence. You will, therefore, be able to destroy our non-violent army without tanks, battle-ships and airships." It may be retorted that the only difference would be that Hitler would have got without fighting what he has gained after a bloody fight. Exactly. The history of Europe would then have been written differently. Possession might (but only might) have been then taken under non-violent resistance, as it has been taken now after perpetration of untold barbarities. Under non-violence only those would have been killed who had trained themselves to be killed, if need be, but without killing anyone and without bearing malice towards anybody. • I dare say that in that case Europe would have added several inches to its moral stature. And in the end I expect it is the moral worth that will count. All else is dross.

Harijan, 22-6-'40

I appeal to every Briton, wherever he may be now, to accept the method of non-violence instead of that of war, for the adjustment of relations between nations and other matters. Your statesmen have declared that this is a war on behalf of democracy. There are many other reasons given in justification. You know them all by heart. I suggest that, at the end of the war, whichever way it ends, there will be no democracy left to represent democracy. This war has descended upon mankind as a curse and a warning. It is a curse inasmuch as it is brutalizing man on a scale hitherto unknown. All distinctions between combatants and non-combatants have been abolished. No one and nothing is to be spared. Lying has been reduced

to an art. Britain was to defend small nationalities. One by one they have vanished, at least for the time being. It is also a warning. It is a warning that, if nobody reads the writing on the wall, man will be reduced to the state of the beast, whom he is shaming by his manners. I read the writing when the hostilities broke out. But I had not the courage to say the word. God has given me the courage to say it before it is too late.

I appeal for cessation of hostilities, not because you are too exhausted to fight, but because war is bad in essence. You want to kill Nazism. You will never kill it by its indifferent adoption. Your soldiers are doing the same work of destruction as the Germans. The only difference is that perhaps yours are not as thorough as the Germans. If that be so, yours will soon acquire the same thoroughness as theirs, if not much greater. On no other condition can you win the war. In other words, you will have to be more ruthless than the Nazis. No cause, however just, can warrant the indiscriminate slaughter that is going on minute by minute. I suggest that a cause that demands the inhumanities that are being perpetrated to-day cannot be called just.

I do not want Britain to be defeated, nor do I want her to be victorious in a trial of brute strength, whether expressed through the muscle or the brain. Your muscular bravery is an established fact. Need you demonstrate that your brain is also as unrivalled in destructive power as your muscle? I hope you do not wish to enter into such an undignified competition with the Nazis. I venture to present you with a nobler and a braver way, worthy of the bravest soldier. I want you to fight Nazism without arms, or, if I am to retain the military terminology, with non-violent arms. I would like you to lay down the arms you have as being useless for saving you or humanity. You will invite Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini to take what they want of the countries you call your possessions. Let them take possession of your beautiful island, with your many beautiful buildings. You will give

all these but neither your souls, nor your minds. If these gentlemen choose to occupy your homes, you will vacate them. If they do not give you free passage out, you will allow yourselves man, woman and child, to be slaughtered, but you will refuse to owe allegiance to them.

This process or method, which I have called non-violent non-co-operation, is not without considerable success in its use in India. Your representatives in India may deny my claim. If they do, I shall feel sorry for them. They may tell you that our non-co-operation was not wholly non-violent, that it was born of hatred. If they give that testimony, I will not deny it. Had it been wholly non-violent, if all the non-co-operators had been filled with goodwill towards you, I make bold to say that you who are India's masters would have become her pupils and, with much greater skill than we have, perfected this matchless weapon and met the German and Italian friends' menace with it. Indeed the history of Europe during the past few months would then have been written differently. Europe would have been spared seas of innocent blood, the rape of so many small nations, and the orgy of hatred.

This is no appeal made by a man who does not know his business. I have been practising with scientific precision non-violence and its possibilities for an unbroken period of over fifty years. I have applied it in every walk of life, domestic, institutional, economic and political. I know of no single case in which it has failed. Where it has seemed sometimes to have failed, I have ascribed it to my imperfections. I claim no perfection for myself. But I do claim to be a passionate seeker after Truth, which is but another name for God. In the course of that search the discovery of non-violence came to me. Its spread is my life mission. I have no interest in living except for the prosecution of that mission.

I claim to have been a lifelong and wholly disinterested friend of the British people. Whatever the ultimate fate of my country, my love for you remains, and will remain, undiminished. My non-violence demands

universal love, and you are not a small part of it. It is that love which has prompted my appeal to you. May God give power to every word of mine. In his name I began to write this, and in His name I close it.

Harijan, 6-7-'40

Not to yield your soul to the conqueror means that you will refuse to do that which your conscience forbids you to do. Suppose the 'enemy' were to ask you to rub your nose on the ground or to pull your ears or to go through such humiliating performances, you will not submit to any of these humiliations. But if he robs you of your possessions, you will yield them because as a votary of *ahimsa* you have from the beginning decided that earthly possessions have nothing to do with your soul. That which you look upon as your own you may keep only so long as the world allows you to own it.

Not to yield your mind means that you will not give way to any temptation. Man is oftentimes weak-minded enough to be caught in the snare of greed and honeyed words. We see this happening daily in our social life. A weak-minded man can never be a *satyagrahi*. The latter's 'no' is invariably a 'no' and his 'yes' an eternal 'yes'. Such a man alone has the strength to be a devotee of truth and *ahimsa*. But here one must know the difference between steadfastness and obstinacy. If after having said 'yes' or 'no' one finds out that the decision was wrong and in spite of that knowledge clings to it, that is obstinacy and folly. It is necessary to think things out carefully and thoroughly before coming to any decision.

The meaning of refusal to own allegiance is clear. You will not bow to the supremacy of the victor, you will not help him to attain his object. Herr Hitler has never dreamt of possessing Britain. He wants the British to admit defeat. The victor can then demand anything he likes from the vanquished, and the latter has perforce to yield. But if defeat is not admitted, the enemy will fight until he has killed his opponent. A *satyagrahi*, however,

is dead to his body even before the enemy attempts to kill him, i. e. he is free from attachment to his body and only lives in the victory of the soul. Therefore, when he is already thus dead, why should he yearn to kill anyone? To die in the act of killing is in essence to die defeated. Because, if the enemy is unable to get what he wants from you alive, he will decide to get it after killing you. If, on the other hand, he realizes that you have not the remotest thought in your mind of raising your hand against him even for the sake of your life, he will lack the zest to kill you. Every hunter has had this experience. No one has ever heard of anyone hunting cows.

Harijan, 18-8-'40

British pacifists have to live their lives in strict accord with the Sermon on the Mount, and they will find immediately that there is much to give up and much to remodel. The greatest thing that they have to deny themselves is the fruit of imperialism. The present complicated life of the Londoner and his high living is possible only because of the hoards brought from Asia, Africa and other parts of the world.

Harijan, 15-3-'42

21

RACE CONFLICT

"Supposing I was a Negro, and my sister was ravished by a White or lynched by a whole community, what would be my duty? — I ask myself. And the answer comes to me: I must not wish ill to these, but neither must I co-operate with them. It may be that ordinarily I depend on the lynching community for my livelihood. I refuse to co-operate with them, refuse even to touch the food that comes from them, and I refuse to co-operate with even my brother Negroes who tolerate the wrong. I have often in my life resorted to the plan. Of course a

mechanical act of starvation will mean nothing. One's faith must remain undimmed whilst life ebbs out minute by minute. But I am a very poor specimen of the practice of non-violence, and my answer may not convince you. But I am striving very hard, and even if I do not succeed fully in this life, my faith will not diminish."

Harijan, 14-3-'36

Germany is showing to the world how efficiently violence can be worked when it is not hampered by any hypocrisy or weakness masquerading as humanitarianism. It is also showing how hideous, terrible and terrifying it looks in its nakedness.

Can the Jews resist this organized and shameless persecution? Is there a way to preserve their self-respect, and not to feel helpless, neglected and forlorn? I submit there is. No person who has faith in a living God need feel helpless or forlorn. Jehovah of the Jews is a God more personal than the God of the Christians, the Mussulmans or the Hindus, though as a matter of fact, in essence, He is common to all and one without a second and beyond description. But as the Jews attribute personality to God and believe that He rules every action of theirs, they ought not to feel helpless. If I were a Jew and were born in Germany and earned my livelihood there, I would claim Germany as my home even as the tallest gentile German might, and challenge him to shoot me or cast me in the dungeon; I would refuse to be expelled or to submit to discriminating treatment. And for doing so I should not wait for the fellow Jews to join me in civil resistance, but would have confidence that in the end the rest were bound to follow my example. If one Jew or all the Jews were to accept the prescription here offered, he or they cannot be worse off than now. And suffering voluntarily undergone will bring them an inner strength and joy which no number of resolutions of sympathy passed in the world outside Germany can. Indeed, even if Britain, France and America were to declare hostilities against

Germany, they can bring no inner joy, no inner strength. The calculated violence of Hitler may even result in a general massacre of the Jews by way of his first answer to the declaration of such hostilities. But if the Jewish mind could be prepared for voluntary suffering, even the massacre I have imagined could be turned into a day of thanksgiving and joy that Jehovah had wrought deliverance of the race even at the hands of the tyrant. For to the God-fearing, death has no terror. It is a joyful sleep to be followed by a waking that would be all the more refreshing for the long sleep.

It is hardly necessary for me to point out that it is easier for the Jews than for the Czechs to follow my prescription. And they have in the Indian Satyagraha Campaign in South Africa an exact parallel. There the Indians occupied precisely the same place that the Jews occupy in Germany.

But the Jews of Germany can offer Satyagraha under infinitely better auspices than the Indians of South Africa. The Jews are a compact, homogeneous community in Germany. They are far more gifted than the Indians of South Africa. And they have organized world opinion behind them. I am convinced that, if someone with courage and vision can arise among them to lead them in non-violent action, the winter of their despair can in the twinkling of an eye be turned into the summer of hope. And what has today become a degrading man-hunt can be turned into a calm and determined stand offered by unarmed men and women possessing the strength of suffering given to them by Jehovah. It will be then a truly religious resistance offered against the godless fury of dehumanized man. The German Jews will score a lasting victory over the German gentiles in the sense that they will have converted the latter to an appreciation of human dignity. They will have rendered service to fellow-Germans and proved their title to be the real Germans as against those who are today dragging, however unknowingly, the German name into the mire.

And now a word to the Jews in Palestine. I have no doubt that they are going about in the wrong way. The Palestine of the Biblical conception is not a geographical tract. It is in their hearts. But if they must look to the Palestine of geography as their national home, it is wrong to enter it under the shadow of the British gun. A religious act cannot be performed with the aid of the bayonet or the bomb. They can settle in Palestine only by the goodwill of the Arabs. They should seek to convert the Arab heart. The same God rules the Arab heart who rules the Jewish heart. They can offer Satyagraha in front of the Arabs and offer themselves to be shot or thrown into the Dead Sea without raising a little finger against them. They will find the world opinion in their favour in their religious aspiration. There are hundreds of ways of reasoning with the Arabs, if they will only discard the help of the British bayonet. As it is, they are co-sharers with the British in despoiling a people who have done no wrong to them.

Let the Jews who claim to be the chosen race⁷ prove their title by choosing the way of non-violence for vindicating their position on earth. Every country is their home including Palestine not by aggression but by loving service. A Jewish friend has sent me a book called *The Jewish Contribution to Civilization* by Cecil Roth. It gives a record of what the Jews have done to enrich the world's literature, art, music, drama, science, medicine, agriculture, etc. Given the will, the Jew can refuse to be treated as the outcaste of the West to be despised or patronized. He can command the attention and respect of the world by being man, the chosen creation of God, instead of being man who is fast sinking to the brute and forsaken by God. They can add to their many contributions the surpassing contribution of non-violent action.

Harijan, 26-11-'38

Have I not repeatedly said that active non-violence is unadulterated love — fellow-feeling? And if the Jews,

instead of being helplessly and of necessity non-violent, adopt active non-violence, i.e. fellow-feeling, for the gentile Germans deliberately, they cannot do any harm to the Germans ; and I am as certain as I am dictating these lines that the stoniest German heart will melt. Great as have been the Jewish contributions to the world's progress, this supreme act of theirs will be their greatest contribution and war will be a thing of the past.

Harijan, 17-12-'38

Friends have sent me two newspaper cuttings criticizing my appeal to the Jews. The two critics suggest that in presenting non-violence to the Jews as a remedy against the wrong done to them I have suggested nothing new, and that they have been practising non-violence for the past two thousand years. Obviously, so far as these critics are concerned, I did not make my meaning clear. The Jews, so far as I know, have never practised non-violence as an article of faith or even as a deliberate policy. Indeed, it is a stigma against them that their ancestors crucified Jesus. Are they not supposed to believe in eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth ? Have they no violence in their hearts for their oppressors ? Do they not want the so-called democratic powers to punish Germany for her persecution and to deliver them from oppression ? If they do, there is no non-violence in their hearts. Their non-violence, if it may be so called, is of the helpless and the weak.

What I have pleaded for is renunciation of violence of the heart and consequent active exercise of the force generated by the great renunciation. One of the critics says that favourable public opinion is necessary for the working of non-violence. The writer is evidently thinking of passive resistance conceived as a weapon of the weak. I have drawn a distinction between passive resistance of the weak and active non-violent resistance of the strong. The latter can and does work in the teeth of the fiercest opposition. But it ends in evoking the widest public sympathy.

FOR PACIFISTS

Sufferings of the non-violent have been known to melt the stoniest hearts. I make bold to say that, if the Jews can summon to their aid the soul power that comes only from non-violence, Herr Hitler will bow before the courage which he has never yet experienced in any large measure in his dealings with men, and which, when it is exhibited, he will own, is infinitely superior to that shown by his best storm troopers. The exhibition of such courage is only possible for those who have a living faith in the God of Truth and Non-violence, i. e. Love.

Harijan, 17-12-'38

It is highly probable that 'a Jewish Gandhi' in Germany, should one arise, could function for about five minutes and would be promptly taken to the guillotine. But that will not disprove my case or shake my belief in the efficacy of *ahimsa*. I can conceive the necessity of the immolation of hundreds, if not thousands, to appease the hunger of dictators who have no belief in *ahimsa*. Indeed the maxim is that *ahimsa* is the most efficacious in front of the 'greatest *himsa*'. Its quality is really tested only in such cases. Sufferers need not see the result during their lifetime. They must have faith that, if their cult survives, the result is a certainty. The method of violence gives no greater guarantee than that of non-violence. It gives infinitely less. For the faith of the votary of *ahimsa* is lacking.

Harijan, 27-5-'39

DISARMAMENT

If Germany today changed her policy and made a determination to use her freedom not for dividing the commerce of the world but for protecting through her moral superiority the weaker races of the earth, she could certainly do that without armament. It would be found that before general disarmament in Europe commences, as it must some day unless Europe is to commit suicide, some nation will have to dare to disarm herself and take large risks. The level of non-violence in that nation, if that event happily comes to pass, will naturally have risen so high as to command universal respect. Her judgments will be unerring, her decisions will be firm, her capacity for heroic self-sacrifice will be great, and she will want to live as much for other nations as for herself.

Young India, 8-10-'25

Not to believe in the possibility of permanent peace is to disbelieve in godliness of human nature. Methods hitherto adopted have failed because rock-bottom sincerity on the part of those who have striven has been lacking. Not that they have realized this lack. Peace is unattainable by part performance of conditions, even as chemical combination is impossible without complete fulfilment of conditions of attainment thereof. If recognized leaders of mankind who have control over engines of destruction were wholly to renounce their use with full knowledge of implications, permanent peace can be obtained. This is clearly impossible without the great powers of the earth renouncing their imperialistic designs. This again seems impossible without these great nations ceasing to believe in soul-destroying competition and to desire to multiply wants and therefore increase their material possessions. It is my conviction that the root of the evil is want of a living faith in a living God. It is a first-class human

tragedy that peoples of the earth who claim to believe in the message of Jesus whom they describe as the Prince of Peace show little of that belief in actual practice. It is painful to see sincere Christian divines limiting the scope of Jesus's message to select individuals. I have been taught from my childhood, and I have tested the truth by experience, that primary virtues of mankind are possible of cultivation by the meanest of the human species. It is this undoubted universal possibility that distinguishes the human from the rest of God's creation. If even one great nation were unconditionally to perform the supreme act of renunciation, many of us would see in our lifetime visible peace established on earth.

Harijan, 16-5-'36

It is open to the great powers to take up non-violence any day and cover themselves with glory and earn the eternal gratitude of posterity. If they or any of them can shed the fear of destruction, if they disarm themselves, they will automatically help the rest to regain their sanity. But then these great powers have to give up imperialistic ambitions and exploitation of the so-called uncivilized or semi-civilized nations of the earth and revise their mode of life. It means a complete revolution. Great nations can hardly be expected in the ordinary course to move spontaneously in a direction the reverse of the one they have followed and, according to their notion of value, from victory to victory. But miracles have happened before and may happen even in this very prosaic age. Who can dare limit God's power of undoing wrong? One thing is certain. If the mad race for armaments continues, it is bound to result in a slaughter such as has never occurred in history. If there is a victor left, the very victory will be a living death for the nation that emerges victorious. There is no escape from the impending doom save through a bold and unconditional acceptance of the non-violent method with all its glorious implications.

Harijan, 12-11-'38

ATOM BOMB

It has been suggested by American friends that the atom bomb will bring in *ahimsa* (non-violence) as nothing else can. It will, if it is meant that its destructive power will so disgust the world that it will turn it away from violence for the time being. This is very like a man glutting himself with dainties to the point of nausea and turning away from them only to return with redoubled zeal after the effect of nausea is well over. Precisely in the same manner will the world return to violence with renewed zeal after the effect of disgust is worn out.

So far as I can see, the atomic bomb has deadened the finest feeling that has sustained mankind for ages. There used to be the so-called laws of war which made it tolerable. Now we know the naked truth. War knows no law except that of might. The atom bomb brought an empty victory to the allied arms but it resulted for the time being in destroying the soul of Japan. What has happened to the soul of the destroying nation is yet too early to see. Forces of nature act in a mysterious manner. We can but solve the mystery by deducing the unknown result from the known results of similar events. A slaveholder cannot hold a slave without putting himself or his deputy in the cage holding the slave. Let no one run away with the idea that I wish to put in a defence of Japanese misdeeds in pursuance of Japan's unworthy ambition. The difference was only one of degree. I assume that Japan's greed was more-unworthy. But the greater unworthiness conferred no right on the less unworthy of destroying without mercy men, women and children of Japan in a particular area.

The moral to be legitimately drawn from the supreme tragedy of the bomb is that it will not be destroyed by counter-bombs even as violence cannot be by

counter-violence. Mankind has to get out of violence only through non-violence. Hatred can be overcome only by love. Counter-hatred only increases the surface as well as the depth of hatred. I am aware that I am repeating what I have many times stated before and practised to the best of my ability and capacity. What I first stated was itself nothing new. It was as old as the hills. Only I recited no copy-book maxim but definitely announced what I believed in every fibre of my being. Sixty years of practice in various walks of life has only enriched the belief which experience of friends has fortified. It is however the central truth by which one can stand alone without flinching. I believe in what Max Muller said years ago, namely that truth needed to be repeated as long as there were men who disbelieved it.

Harijan, 7-7-'46

In this age of the atom bomb unadulterated non-violence is the only force that can confound all the tricks of violence put together.

Harijan, 16-11-'47

24

SCORCHED EARTH

I see neither bravery nor sacrifice in destroying life or property for offence or defence. I would far rather leave, if I must, my crops and homestead for the enemy to use than destroy them for the sake of preventing their use by him. There is reason, sacrifice and even bravery in so leaving my homestead and crops, if I do so not out of fear but because I refuse to regard anyone as my enemy — that is, out of a humanitarian motive.

Harijan, 22-3-'42

There is no bravery in my poisoning my well or filling it in so that my brother who is at war with me may not use the water. Let us assume that I am fighting him-in

the orthodox manner. Nor is there sacrifice in it, for it does not purify me, and sacrifice, as its root meaning implies, presupposes purity. Such destruction may be likened to cutting one's nose to spite one's face. Warriors of old had wholesome laws of war. Among the excluded things were poisoning wells and destroying food crops. But I do claim that there are bravery and sacrifice in my leaving my wells, crops and homestead intact, bravery in that I deliberately run the risk of the enemy feeding himself at my expense and pursuing me, and sacrifice in that the sentiment of leaving something for the enemy purifies and ennobles me.

Harijan, 12-4-'42

25

SABOTAGE AND SECRECY

A friend put before Gandhiji some of his doubts. Was destruction of Government property violence? "You say that nobody has a right to destroy any property not his own. If so, is not Government property mine? I hold it is mine and I may destroy it."

"There is a double fallacy involved in your argument," replied Gandhiji. "In the first place, conceding that Government property is national property — which today it is not — I may not destroy it because I am dissatisfied with the Government. But even a national Government will be unable to carry on for a day if everybody claimed the right to destroy bridges, communications, roads, etc., because he disapproved of some of its activities. Moreover, the evil resides not in bridges, roads, etc., which are inanimate objects but in men. It is the latter who need to be tackled. The destruction of bridges, etc., by means of explosives does not touch this evil but only provokes a worse evil in the place of the one it seeks to end.

"I agree," rejoined the friend, "that the evil is within ourselves, not in the bridge which can be used for a good

purpose as well as an evil one.' I also agree that its blowing up provokes counter-violence of a worse type. But it may be necessary from a strategic point of view for the success of the movement and in order to prevent demoralization."

"It is an old argument," replied Gandhiji. "One used to hear it in the old days in defence of terrorism. Sabotage is a form of violence. People have realized the futility of physical violence but some people apparently think that it may be successfully practised in its modified form as sabotage. It is my conviction that the whole mass of people would not have risen to the height of courage and fearlessness that they have but for the working of full non-violence. How it works we do not yet fully know. But the fact remains that under non-violence we have progressed from strength to strength even through our apparent failures and set-backs. On the other hand terrorism resulted in demoralization. Haste leads to waste."

The discussion then turned upon secrecy. Gandhiji said : "No secret organization, however big, could do any good. Secrecy aims at building a wall of protection round you. *Ahimsa* disdains all such protection. It functions in the open and in the face of odds, the heaviest conceivable. We have to organize for action a vast people that have been crushed under the heel of unspeakable tyranny for centuries. They cannot be organized by any other than open truthful means. I have grown up from youth to 76 years in abhorrence of secrecy. There must be no watering down of the ideal. Unless we cling to the formula in its fulness, we shall not make any headway.

Harijan, 10-2-'46

RED CROSS

I draw no distinction between those who wield the weapons of destruction and those who do Red Cross work. Both participate in war and advance its cause. Both are guilty of the crime of war.

Young India, 13-9-'28

' I am ashamed to have to own that I do not know the history of this wonderful and magnificent organization (International Red Cross Society). If it has saved prisoners by the thousands, my head bows before it. But having paid this tribute, may I say that this organization should cease to think of giving relief after the war but think of giving relief *without* the war? If war had no redeeming feature, no courage and heroism behind it, it would be a despicable thing, and would not need speeches to destroy it. But what I would suggest to you is infinitely nobler than war in all its branches including Red Cross organization. Believe me there are many more million prisoners — slaves of their passions and conditions of life, and believe me that there are millions wounded by their own folly, and millions of wrecked homes on the face of the earth. The peace societies of tomorrow would, therefore, have enough work cut out for them when they take up international service.

Harijan, 12-10 '35

INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE AND GOVERNMENT

There will be an international league only when all the nations, big or small, composing it are fully independent. The nature of that independence will correspond to the extent of non-violence assimilated by the nations concerned. One thing is certain. In a society based on non-violence, the smallest nation will feel as tall as the tallest. The idea of superiority and inferiority will be wholly obliterated.

Harijan, 11-2-'39

Q. Do you foresee the possibility of the world being united under one central governing body composed of representatives of the component parts?

A. That is the only condition on which the world can live.

Q. As a result of your experiment during the past five months, do you feel that the principle of non-violence can yet be triumphant in the solution of the world's problems?

A. My five months in Noakhali have only confirmed my previous experience that non-violence can solve all our ills.

Harijan, 8-6-'47

DEMOCRACY

Democracy to be true should cease to rely upon the army for anything whatsoever. It will be a poor democracy that depends for its existence on military assistance. Military force interferes with the free growth of the mind. It smothers the soul of man.

Harijan, 9-6-'46

Science of war leads one to dictatorship pure and simple. Science of non-violence can alone lead one to pure democracy.

Harijan, 15-10-'38

Democracy and violence can ill go together. The States that are today nominally democratic have either to become frankly totalitarian or, if they are to become truly democratic, they must become courageously non-violent. It is a blasphemy to say that non-violence can only be practised by individuals and never by nations which are composed of individuals.

Harijan, 12-11-'38

Q. Why do you say, "Democracy can only be saved through non-violence?" (The questioner is an American friend.)

A. Because democracy, so long as it is sustained by violence cannot provide for or protect the weak. My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest. That can never happen except through non-violence. No country in the world today shows any but patronizing regard for the weak. The weakest, you say, go to the wall. Take your own case. Your land is owned by a few capitalist owners. The same is true of South Africa. These large holdings cannot be sustained except by violence, veiled if not open. Western democracy as it functions today, is diluted Nazism or Fascism. At best it is merely a cloak to hide the Nazi and the Fascist tendencies of imperialism. Why is there the war today, if it is not for the satisfaction of the desire to share the spoils? It was not through democratic methods that Britain bagged India. What is the meaning of South African democracy? Its very constitution has been drawn to protect the White man against the coloured man, the natural occupant. Your own history is perhaps blacker still, in spite of what the Northern States did for the abolition of slavery. The way

you have treated the Negro presents a discreditable record. And it is to save such democracies that the war is being fought. There is something very hypocritical about it. I am thinking just now in terms of non-violence and trying to expose violence in its nakedness.

India is trying to evolve true democracy, i. e. without violence. Our weapons are those of Satyagraha expressed through the *charkha*, the village industries, primary education through handicrafts, removal of untouchability, communal harmony, prohibition, and non-violent organization of labour as in Ahmedabad. These mean mass effort and mass education. We have big agencies for conducting these activities. They are purely voluntary, and their only sanction is service of the lowliest.

This is the permanent part of the non-violent effort. From this effort is created the capacity to offer non-violent resistance called non-co-operation and civil disobedience which may culminate in mass refusal to pay rent and taxes. As you know, we have tried non-co-operation and civil disobedience on a fairly large scale and fairly successfully. The experiment has in it promise of a brilliant future. As yet our resistance has been that of the weak. The aim is to develop the resistance of the strong. Your wars will never ensure safety for democracy. India's experiment can and will, if the people come up to the mark or, to put it in another way, if God gives me the necessary wisdom and strength to bring the experiment to fruition.

Harijan, 18-5-'40

I feel that fundamentally the disease is the same in Europe as it is in India, in spite of the fact that in the former country the people enjoy political self-government. The peoples of Europe have no doubt political power, but no Swaraj. Asian and African races are exploited for their partial benefit, and they, on their part, are being exploited by the ruling class or caste under the sacred name of democracy. At the root, therefore, the disease appears to be the same as in India. The same remedy is, therefore,

likely to be applicable. Shorn of all the camouflage, the exploitation of the masses of Europe is sustained by violence.

Violence on the part of the masses will never remove the disease. Anyway, up to now experience shows that success of violence has been short-lived. It has led to greater violence. What has been tried hitherto has been a variety of violence and artificial checks dependent mainly upon the will of the violent. At the crucial moment these checks have naturally broken down. It seems to me, therefore, that sooner or later the European masses will have to take to non-violence, if they are to find their deliverance. That there is no hope of their taking to it in a body and at once does not baffle me. A few thousand years are but a speck in the vast time circle. Someone has to make a beginning with a faith that will not flinch.

Young India, 3-9-'25

"You would govern non-violently. But all legislation is violence."

"No, not all legislation. Legislation imposed by people upon themselves is non-violence to the extent it is possible in society. A society organized and run on the basis of complete non-violence would be the purest anarchy."

"Do you think it is a realizable ideal?"

"Yes. It is realizable to the extent non-violence is realizable. That State is perfect and non-violent where the people are governed the least. The nearest approach to purest anarchy would be a democracy based on non-violence. The European democracies are to my mind a negation of democracy."

"Do you think that non-violence of the democracy which you visualize was ever realized in the olden times?"

"I do not know. But if it was not, it only means that we had never made the attempt to realize the highest in us. I have no doubt in my mind that at some stage we were wiser, and that we have to grow wiser than we

are today in order to find what beauties are hidden in human nature. Perfect non-violence is impossible so long as we exist physically, for we would want some space at least to occupy. Perfect non-violence whilst you are inhabiting the body is only a theory like Euclid's point or straight line, but we have to endeavour every moment of our lives."

Harijan, 21-7-'40

If we would see our dream of *Panchayat Raj*, i.e. true democracy realized, we would regard the humblest and lowest Indian as being equally the ruler of India with the tallest in the land. This presupposes that all are pure or will become pure if they are not. And purity must go hand-in-hand with wisdom. No one would then harbour any distinction between community and community, caste and outcaste. Everybody would regard all as equal with oneself and hold them together in the silken net of love. No one would regard another as untouchable. We would hold as equal the toiling labourer and the rich capitalist. Everybody would know how to earn an honest living by the sweat of one's brow and make no distinction between intellectual and physical labour. To hasten this consummation, we would voluntarily turn ourselves into scavengers. No one who has wisdom will ever touch opium, liquor or any intoxicants. Everybody would observe *swadeshi* as the rule of life and regard every woman, not being his wife, as his mother, sister or daughter according to her age, never lust after her in his heart. He would be ready to lay down his life when occasion demands it, never want to take another's life.

Harijan, 18-1-'48

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Socialism is a beautiful word and so far as I am aware, in socialism all the members of society are equal — none low, none high. In the individual body the head is not high because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as members of the individual body are equal, so are the members of society. This is socialism.

In it the prince and the peasant, the wealthy and the poor, the employer and the employee are all on the same level. In terms of religion there is no duality in socialism. It is all unity. Looking at society all the world over there is nothing but duality or plurality. Unity is conspicuous by its absence. This man is high, that one is low, that is a Hindu, that a Muslim, third a Christian, fourth a Parsi, fifth a Sikh, sixth a Jew. Even among these there are subdivisions. In the unity of my conception there is perfect unity in the plurality of designs.

In order to reach this state we may not look on things philosophically and say that we need not make a move until all are converted to socialism. Without changing our life we may go on giving addresses, forming parties and hawk-like seize the game when it comes our way. This is no socialism. The more we treat it as game to be seized, the farther it must recede from us.

Socialism begins with the first convert. If there is one such, you can add zeroes to the one and the first zero will account for ten and every addition will account for ten times the previous number. If, however, the beginner is a zero, in other words, no one makes the beginning, multiplicity of zeroes will also produce zero value. Time and paper occupied in writing zeroes will be so much waste.

This socialism is as pure as crystal. It, therefore, requires crystal-like means to achieve it. Impure means

result in an impure end. Hence the prince and the peasant will not be equalized by cutting off the prince's head, nor can the process of cutting off equalize the employer and the employed. One cannot reach truth by untruthfulness. Truthful conduct alone can reach truth. Non-violence is embedded in truth and vice versa. Hence has it been said that they are faces of the same coin. Either is inseparable from the other. Read the coin either way. The spelling of words will be different. The value is the same. This blessed state is unattainable without perfect purity. Harbour impurity of mind or body and you have untruth and violence in you.

Therefore, only truthful, non-violent and pure-hearted socialists will be able to establish a socialistic society in India and the world. To my knowledge there is no country in the world which is purely socialistic. Without the means described above the existence of such a society is impossible.

(Translated from Gujarati)

Harijan, 13-7-'47

I shall bring about economic equality through non-violence, by converting the people to my point of view by harnessing the forces of love as against hatred. I will not wait till I have converted the whole society to my view but will straightaway make a beginning with myself. It goes without saying that I cannot hope to bring about economic equality of my conception, if I am the owner of fifty motor cars or even of ten *bighas* of land. For that I have to reduce myself to the level of the poorest of the poor. That is what I have been trying to do for the last fifty years or more, and so I claim to be a foremost Communist although I make use of cars and other facilities offered to me by the rich. They have no hold on me and I can shed them at a moment's notice, if the interests of the masses demand it.

Harijan, 31-3-'46

I am yet ignorant of what exactly Bolshevism is. But I do know that in so far as it is based on violence and denial of God, it repels me. I do not believe in short — violent — cuts to success. Those Bolshevik friends who are bestowing their attention on me should realize that, however much I may sympathize with and admire worthy motives, I am an uncompromising opponent of violent methods even to serve the noblest of causes. There is, therefore, really no meeting ground between the school of violence and myself. But my creed of non-violence not only does not preclude me but compels me even to associate with anarchists and all those who believe in violence. But that association is always with the sole object of weaning them from what appears to me to be their error. For experience convinces me that permanent good can never be the outcome of untruth and violence. Even if my belief is a fond delusion, it will be admitted that it is a fascinating delusion.

Young India, 11-12-'24

I want to deal with one great evil that is afflicting society today. The capitalist and the zamindar talk of their rights, the labourer on the other hand of his, the prince of his divine right to rule, the ryot of his to resist it. If all simply insist on rights and no duties, there will be utter confusion and chaos.

If instead of insisting on rights every one does his duty, there will immediately be the rule of order established among mankind. If you apply this simple and universal rule to employers and labourers, landlords and tenants, the princes and their subjects, or the Hindus and the Muslims, you will find that the happiest relations can be established in all walks of life without creating disturbance in and dislocation of life and business which you see in India as in the other parts of the world. What I call the law of Satyagraha is to be deduced from an appreciation of duties and rights flowing therefrom.

What, for example, is the duty of the Hindu towards his Muslim neighbour? His duty is to befriend him as man, to share his joys and sorrows and help him in distress. He will then have the right to expect similar treatment from his Muslim neighbour and will probably get the expected response. But suppose that the few Muslims do not reciprocate the correct behaviour of the many Hindus and show fight in every action, it will be a sign of unmanliness. What is then the duty of the many Hindus? Certainly not to overpower them by the brute strength of the many; that will be usurpation of an unearned right. Their duty will be to check their unmanly behaviour as they would that of their blood-brothers.

Harijan, 6-7-'47

Satyagraha is a law of universal application. Beginning with the family its use can be extended to every other circle. Suppose a land-owner exploits his tenants and mulcts them of the fruit of their toil by appropriating it to his own use. When they expostulate with him he does not listen and raises objections that he requires so much for his wife, so much for his children and so on. The tenants or those who have espoused their cause and have influence will make an appeal to his wife to expostulate with her husband. She would probably say that for herself she does not need his exploited money. The children will say likewise that they would earn for themselves what they need.

Supposing further that he listens to nobody or that his wife and children combine against the tenants, they will not submit. They will quit if asked to do so but they will make it clear that the land belongs to him who tills it. The owner cannot till all the land himself and he will have to give in to their just demands. It may, however, be that the tenants are replaced by others. Agitation short of violence will then continue till the replacing tenants see their error and make common cause with the evicted tenants. Thus Satyagraha is a process of educating public

opinion, such that it covers all the elements of society and in the end makes itself irresistible.

The conditions necessary for the success of Satyagraha are : (1) the *satyagrahi* should not have any hatred in his heart against the opponent. (2) The issue must be true and substantial. (3) The *satyagrahi* must be prepared to suffer till the end.

Harijan, 31-3-'46

Q. May a non-violent man possess wealth, and if he may, how can he keep it non-violently ?

A. He may not own any wealth, though he may possess millions. Let him hold it in trust. If he lives among dacoits and thieves, he may possess very little, indeed little beyond a loin-cloth. And if he does he will convert them.

In a non-violent State there will be very few dacoits. For the individual the golden rule is that he will *own* nothing. If I decided to settle and work among the so-called criminal tribes, I should go to them without any belongings and depend on them for my food and shelter. The moment they feel that I am in their midst in order to serve them, they will be my friends. In that attitude is true *ahimsa*.

Harijan, 1-9-'40

Q. You have asked rich men to be trustees. Is it implied that they should give up private ownership in their property and create out of it a trust valid in the eyes of the law and managed democratically ?

In answer Gandhiji said that he adhered to the position taken by him years ago that everything belonged to God and was from God. Therefore it was for His people as a whole, not for a particular individual. When an individual had more than his proportionate portion he became a trustee of that portion for God's people.

God who was all-powerful had no need to store. He created from day to day ; hence men also should in theory live from day to day and not stock things. If this truth was imbibed by the people generally, it would become legalized and trusteeship would become a legalized institution. He wished it became a gift from India to the world. Then there would be no exploitation and no reserves as in Australia and other countries for White men and their posterity. In these distinctions lay the seed of a war more virulent than the last two.

Harijan, 23-2-'47

"Many ancient *Zamindaris* existed long before the advent of the British and were exercising sovereign power," rejoined the friend, "as a product of the indigenous social and economic system of a long standing. Don't you think they have a title to continue their existence? They are trying their best to discharge a philanthropic function in the shape of founding educational and social institutions."

"Anything that is ancient and consistent with moral values has a title to be retained," answered Gandhiji. "*Per contra* anything that does not conform to moral values has to go. Wrong has no prescriptive right to exist merely because it is of a long standing. If those who are on your *Zamindaris* feel one with you and you with them, like members of a family, you have nothing to fear from anybody."

Harijan, 28-4-'46

From what will the masses be delivered? It will not do to answer vaguely: 'from exploitation and degradation'. Is not the answer this that they want to occupy the status that capital does today? If so, it can be attained only by violence. But if they want to shun the evils of capital, in other words, if they would revise the viewpoint of capital, then they would strive to attain a juster distribution of the products of labour. This immediately

takes us to contentment and simplicity, voluntarily adopted. Under the new outlook multiplicity of material wants will not be the aim of life, the aim will be rather their restriction consistently with comfort. We shall cease to think of getting what we can, but we shall decline to receive what all cannot get. It occurs to me that it ought not to be difficult to make a successful appeal to the masses of Europe in terms of economics, and a fairly successful working of such an experiment must lead to immense and unconscious spiritual results. I do not believe that the spiritual law works on a field of its own. On the contrary, it expresses itself only through the ordinary activities of life. It thus affects the economic, the social and the political fields. If the masses of Europe can be persuaded to adopt the view I have suggested, it will be found that violence will be wholly unnecessary to attain the aim, and that they can easily come to their own by following out the obvious corollaries of non-violence. It may even be that what seems to me to be so natural and feasible for India may take longer to permeate the inert Indian masses than the active European masses. But I must reiterate my confession that all my argument is based on suppositions and assumptions and must, therefore, be taken for what it is worth.

Young India, 3-9-'25

The attainment of freedom, whether for a man, a nation or the world, must be in exact proportion to the attainment of non-violence by each. Let those, therefore, who believe in non-violence as the only method of achieving real freedom, keep the lamp of non-violence burning bright in the midst of the present impenetrable gloom.

Young India, 20-5-'26

I hold that non-violence is not merely a personal virtue. It is also a social virtue to be cultivated like the

other virtues. Surely society is largely regulated by the expression of non-violence in its mutual dealings. What I ask for is an extension of it on a larger, national and international scale.

Harijan, 7-1-'39

Q. Has the spinning wheel a message for America ? Can it serve as a counter-weapon to the atom bomb ?

A. I do feel that it has a message for the U. S. A. and the whole world. But it cannot be until India has demonstrated to the world that it has made the spinning wheel its own, which it has not done today. The fault is not of the wheel. I have not the slightest doubt that the saving of India and the world lies in the wheel. If India became the slave of machines, then, I say, heaven save the world. India has a far nobler mission, viz. to establish friendship and peace in the world. Peace cannot be established through mere conferences. Peace is being broken, as we all see, even while conferences are being held.

Q. Something has to be found that would save civilization from destruction. Life must be simplified.

A. Human personality cannot be sustained in any other way. I stand by what is implied in the phrase 'unto this last'. We must do even unto this last as we would have the world do by us. All must have equal opportunity. Given the opportunity, every human being has the same possibility for spiritual growth. That is what the spinning wheel symbolizes.

Harijan, 17-11-'46

It is certainly not necessary for the Western people to preach and practise the spinning wheel unless they will do so out of sympathy, or for discipline, or with a view to applying their matchless inventive faculty to making the spinning wheel a better instrument while retaining its essential characteristic as a cottage industry. But the message of the spinning wheel is much wider than its

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circumference. Its message is one of simplicity, service of mankind, living so as not to hurt others, creating an indissoluble bond between the rich and the poor, capital and labour, the prince and the peasant. That larger message is naturally for all.

Organization of machinery for the purpose of concentrating wealth and power in the hands of a few and for the exploitation of many I hold to be altogether wrong. Much of the organization of machinery of the present age is of that type. The movement of the spinning wheel is an organized attempt to displace machinery from that state of exclusiveness and exploitation and to place it in its proper state. Under my scheme, therefore, men in charge of machinery will think not of themselves or even of the nation to which they belong but of the whole human race. Thus Lancashire men will cease to use their machinery for exploiting India and other countries, but on the contrary they will devise means of enabling India to convert in her own villages her cotton into cloth. Nor will Americans, under my scheme, seek to enrich themselves by exploiting the other races of the earth through their inventive skill.

Young India, 17-9-'25

You cannot build non-violence on a factory civilization, but it can be built on self-contained villages. Even if Hitler was so minded, he could not devastate seven hundred thousand non-violent villages. He would himself become non-violent in the process. Rural economy as I have conceived it eschews exploitation altogether, and exploitation is the essence of violence. You have, therefore, to be rural-minded before you can be non-violent, and to be rural-minded you have to have faith in the spinning wheel.

Harijan, 4-11-'39

I do not believe that industrialization is necessary in any case for any country. It is much less so for India.

Indeed, I believe that Independent India can only discharge her duty towards a groaning world by adopting a simple but ennobled life by developing her thousands of cottages and living at peace with the world. High thinking is inconsistent with complicated material life based on high speed imposed on us by Mammon worship. All the graces of life are possible only when we learn the art of living nobly.

Whether such plain living is possible for an isolated nation, however large geographically and numerically in the face of a world, armed to the teeth and in the midst of pomp and circumstance, is a question open to the doubt of a sceptic. The answer is straight and simple. If plain life is worth living, then the attempt is worth making even though, only an individual or a group makes the effort.

At the same time I believe that some key industries are necessary. I do not believe in arm-chair or armed socialism. I believe in action according to my belief, without waiting for wholesale conversion. Hence, without having to enumerate key industries, I would have State ownership, where a large number of people have to work together. The ownership of the products of their labour, whether skilled or unskilled, will vest in them through the State. But as I can conceive such a State only based on non-violence, I would not dispossess moneyed men by force but would invite their co-operation in the process of conversion to State ownership. There are no *pariahs* of society, whether they are millionaires or paupers. The two are sores of the same disease. And all are men "for a' that".

Harijan, 1-9-'46

My idea of village Swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus every village's first

concern will be to grow its' own food crops and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and playground for adults and children. Then if there is more land available, it will grow *useful* money crops, thus excluding *ganja*, tobacco, opium and the like. The village will maintain a village theatre, school and public hall. It will have its own waterworks ensuring clean water supply. This can be done through controlled wells or tanks. Education will be compulsory up to the final basic course. As far as possible every activity will be conducted on the co-operative basis. There will be no caste such as we have today with their graded untouchability. Non-violence with its technique of Satyagraha and non-co-operation will be the sanction of the village community. There will be a compulsory service of village guards who will be selected by rotation from the register maintained by the village. The Government of the village will be conducted by the *panchayat* of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. These will have all the authority and jurisdiction required. Since there will be no system of punishments in the accepted sense, this *panchayat* will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office.

Harijan, 26-7-'42

Every village will be a republic or *panchayat* having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world. It will be trained and prepared to perish in the attempt to defend itself against any onslaught from without. Thus, ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit. This does not exclude dependence on and willing help from neighbours or from the world. It will be free and voluntary play of mutual forces. Such a society is necessarily highly cultured in which every man and woman knows what he or she wants and, what is more, knows that no

one should want anything that others cannot have with equal labour.

This society must naturally be based on truth and non-violence which, in my opinion, are not possible without a living belief in God, meaning a self-existent, all-knowing living Force which inheres in every other force known to the world and which depends on none, and which will live when all other forces may conceivably perish or cease to act. I am unable to account for my life without belief in this all-embracing living Light.

In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be everwidening, never ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units.

Therefore, the outermost circumstance will not wield power to crush the inner circle but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it. I may be taunted with the retort that this is all Utopian and, therefore, not worth a single thought. If Euclid's point, though incapable of being drawn by human agency, has an imperishable value, my picture has its own for mankind to live. Let India live for this true picture, though never realizable in its completeness. We must have a proper picture of what we want, before we can have something approaching it. If there ever is to be a republic of every village in India, then I claim verity for my picture in which the last is equal to the first or, in other words, no one is to be the first and none the last.

In this picture every religion has its full and equal place. We are all leaves of a majestic tree whose trunk cannot be shaken off its roots which are deep down in the bowels of the earth. The mightiest wind cannot move it.

In this there is no room for machines that would displace human labour and that would concentrate power in a few hands. Labour has its unique place in a cultured human family. Every machine that helps every individual has a place. But I must confess that I have never sat down to think out what that machine can be. I have thought of Singer's sewing machine. But even that is perfunctory. I do not need it to fill in my picture.

Harijan, 28-7-'46

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INDIA AND HER NON-VIOLENT HERITAGE

India has an unbroken tradition of non-violence from times immemorial. But at no time in her ancient history, as far as I know it, has it had complete non-violence in action pervading the whole land. Nevertheless, it is my unshakable belief that her destiny is to deliver the message of non-violence to mankind. It may take ages to come to fruition. But so far as I can judge, no other country will precede her in the fulfilment of that mission.

Harijan, 12-10-'35

Hindus, although they have been taught to believe in *ahimsa*, have not shown *en masse* the strength of *ahimsa*, have never shown its superiority, when matched against physical strength. I have maintained that superiority over physical strength, however overwhelming, is the core of *ahimsa*, and I have further maintained that this non-violence can be exercised as well by individuals as by groups of them, yea, even by millions together. The experiment is still in the making. Sufficient evidence has accumulated during the past twenty years to show that the experiment is worth making.

Harijan, 6-1-'40

FINAL STOCK-TAKING

How can you account for the growing violence among your people on the part of political parties for the furtherance of political ends? Is this the result of the thirty years of non-violent practice for ending British rule? Does your message of non-violence still hold good for the world?

I have condensed the sentiments of my correspondents in my own language. In answer I must confess my bankruptcy, not that of non-violence. I have already said that the non-violence that was offered during the past thirty years was that of the weak. Whether it is a good enough answer or not is for others to judge. It must be further admitted that such non-violence can have no play in the altered circumstances. India has no experience of the non-violence of the strong. It serves no purpose for me to continue to repeat that the non-violence of the strong is the strongest force in the world. The truth requires constant and extensive demonstration. This I am endeavouring to do to the best of my ability. What if the best of my ability is very little? May I not be living in a fool's paradise? Why should I ask people to follow me in the fruitless search? These are pertinent questions. My answer is quite simple. I ask nobody to follow me. Every one should follow his or her own inner voice. If he or she has no ears to listen to it, he or she should do the best he or she can. In no case should he or she imitate others sheeplike.

There is no hope for the aching world except through the narrow and straight path of non-violence. Millions like me may fail to prove the truth in their own lives, that would be their failure, never that of the eternal law.

Harijan, 29-6-'47

